

IN THESE TIMES

Down and out on the farm

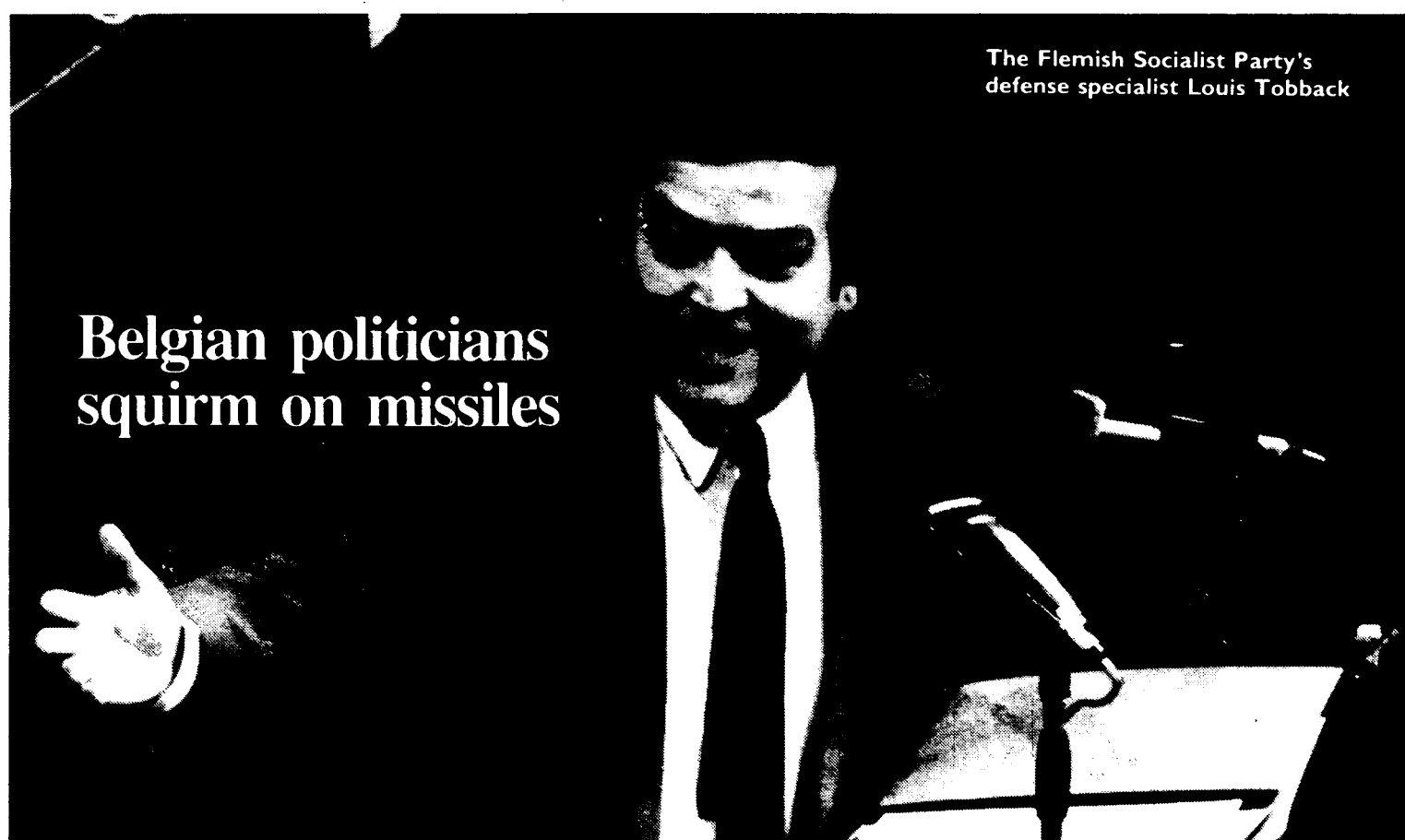
Will nearly half of
American family farmers
lose their land in the
next few years?

Photo: Marc PoKempner

DAVID MOBERG REPORTS **PAGE 8**

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Belgian politicians squirm on missiles



The Flemish Socialist Party's defense specialist Louis Tobback

By Diana Johnstone

BRUSSELS

In France, at the mere mention of Belgium faces light up waiting for the joke. And when it comes to debating the deployment of cruise nuclear missiles, the Belgian parliament seems to be a theater of Belgian jokes. The politicians take turns standing up to make statements where the reasoning falls over its own feet. The cause of their comic confusion is all too clear: they are caught squirming between the dictates of NATO and fear of the voters.

This is the year when, according to NATO's schedule, deployment of Belgium's batch of 48 cruise missiles is to begin. It is also an election year. Prime Minister Wilfried Martens and Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans went to Washington in mid-January to try to explain this problem to President Reagan and flew back issuing a barrage of contradictory statements. They spoke of substituting a "political calendar" for NATO's "technical-military calendar," which calls for installing the first 16 cruise missiles at Florennes air base next March. What this meant was that Martens' own Flemish Christian Social Party wants to postpone deployment until after the elections scheduled for December 8. The party's labor wing would rather keep equivocating through the campaign than have to try to explain to angry voters why the missiles are there.

A recent poll showed 45 percent of Belgians against missile deployment and only 18 percent in favor. Feeling is even stronger in Dutch-speaking Flanders than in French-speaking Wallonia. In Flanders, the Christian Social Party is hard pressed by the Flemish Socialist Party, whose strong opposition to the missiles is part of its general strategy of broadening its appeal to win over Catholic left voters.

Since the NATO missile decision in December 1979, Belgium has reserved the right to "evaluate" the situation every six months in view of progress in arms control negotiations. This has been a way of leaving open the hope that some marvelous breakthrough in Soviet-American arms control talks might spare Belgium from having to accept its quota of cruise missiles. Under questioning in parliament on January 21, Prime Minister Martens said, "We have lifted our evaluation mechanism." The Flemish Socialist Party's defense specialist Louis Tobback then asked, "Does this mean the government has taken a decision to deploy the missiles? If not, correct me." Since he was not corrected, the Socialists and the press consider that Martens has indirectly confirmed a government decision made probably just after Martens and Tindemans got back from the U.S. It was still not clear when, between next March and the end of 1987, the missiles would actually be installed.

Pierre Galand of Oxfam, president of the Comité National d'Action pour la Paix et le Développement (CNAAPD), the Walloon peace movement, said, "These politicians' pirouettes only deepen the chasm between public opinion which—surveys prove—has learned a lot in the last five years and a government that has not learned anything." The Belgian peace movement is planning a big mobilization against the missiles on October 20, seven weeks before the elections.

No matter who wins the elections, it looks scarcely possible to put together a clearly anti-missile government coalition. The parties most outspoken against the nuclear missiles are the small ones, the Flemish nationalist Volksunie whose pacifism dates from World War I, the Communists and, above all, the Belgian "Greens," Agalev-Ecolo, who will be left out of any governing coalition. At best, the present coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals (the most conservative, pro-American and pro-missile party) could be replaced by a coalition of Christian Democrats and Socialists. The Flemish Socialists are thoroughly committed to trying to get rid of the missiles. But the French-speaking Walloon Socialist Party is ambiguous on the issue. The Walloon Socialists are much more concerned with economic issues, especially since their rust bowl industrial region is suffering from one of the worst unemployment rates in Europe.

The political system does not appear able to reflect public opinion on the missile issue. One factor, visible in the parliamentary debate, is a sort of generation gap: political leadership is mostly in the hands of men whose careers, sentiments and perhaps fortunes are rooted in the American liberation of Europe 40 years ago. The pro-missile speakers seemed to be living in the past, pretending to be Churchill warning against the errors of Chamberlain at Munich.

The majority of the political class are obviously convinced that

THE INSIDER STORY

Belgium must be subservient to some greater power, and they would rather be subservient to the Americans than to the Russians or the Germans. Liberal Party leader Louis Michel warned that if Belgium backed out of its missile commitment, this could lead to such a weakening of NATO that "the entire defense of Europe would depend on Germany alone." And Germany, he said, is "divided and fraught with sub-nationalist forces." Thus the Soviet Union, he suggested, would be able to obtain German neutralism in exchange for German reunification.

Flanders' most influential political commentator, Manu Ruys, in a front-page editorial in *De Standaard* on January 17 (the day the cabinet apparently finally decided to deploy the missiles) said the debate was "more than just a controversy about the deployment of new nuclear weapons." The real issue was of "far-reaching historical significance" and had to do with whether or not Western Europe would stay within the Atlantic Alliance or take a more "uncertain" course in which Germany would play a dominant role.

"The second choice implies—even if it is not stated outright—the formation of a European third power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This vision is connected with the concept of liquidating the division of Europe and considering NATO an obstacle to all-European conciliation." Ruys claimed that the Flemish Socialists and the Dutch left, despite "lip service to NATO," really favor reconciliation between Western European countries and the Communist regimes of the East. "In that vision it is hoped that the two Germany's will be neutralized...and be unified as a central piece of a new Europe."

This is political fiction playing on fears of Germany to combat opponents of the missiles. Most of the Dutch left is against nuclear weapons but not against NATO, much less against an American withdrawal that would turn Europe over to the Germans.

Ruys concluded that the Belgian government must choose between the Atlantic Alliance and "a European neutralism which—in view of the uncertain but dominant German factor—would not be without dangers." Thus with the necessary subtlety, Ruys put forth an argument playing the German scare against the missile scare.

Public opinion polls offer the politicians little hope of winning over the population to the cruise missiles. But they can hope for public resignation. A Liberal speaker in the parliamentary debate noted that although the most recent poll showed 45 percent opposed to the missiles, it also showed that only 6 percent still thought deployment could be stopped, whereas an overwhelming majority believed the missiles would be deployed regardless of their opposition. This, the Liberal parliamentarian noted with satisfaction, showed that "the Belgian people have good sense." That is an example of a "Belgian joke."

Who says you can't go home again?

As you may have noticed, Patricia Aufderheide has returned as cultural editor of *In These Times*. Pat resigned two-and-a-half years ago and moved to Washington, D.C., first to work at *American Film* and then as a freelance writer. We mourned her loss, but were happy that she continued to write regularly for us *in absentia*. Now, much to our joy, she has also resumed editorial responsibilities for Arts and Entertainment. She will be working from Washington. Those wishing to submit manuscripts should write to 3136 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20010.

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Starvation is on the upswing in Eritrea

By Dan Connell

HAWASHEIT, ERITREA

A FRAIL 15-YEAR-OLD MOTHER of two arrived at this improvised camp for displaced people after a tortuous trek across the Barka desert. Her three-year-old son whimpered at her withered breast, seeking milk that was no longer there.

The boy's spindly arms hung limp from his horribly shrunken body, the yellowed skin stretched tight across protruding bones. His eyes stared blankly into space. By the next morning he was dead, one of seven to perish here in a 24-hour period.

Hawasheit is the fastest growing of 30 camps for 100,000 displaced people run by the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) in opposition-held areas of Eritrea. Between 100 and 150 starving peasant farmers and nomads arrive here each night to add their numbers to the almost 3,000 who came in January.

ERA provides a grain ration of 500 grams per person per day, but there is no milk powder available for the most vulnerable people, and the death rate appears to be increasing steadily due to the combined effects of drought and war in this bitterly contested Red Sea territory.

Ethiopia forcibly annexed the former Italian colony in 1962 after abrogating a 10-year, UN-sponsored federation between the two states. This triggered what has become the longest running and perhaps the most politically complex conflict in modern African history.

The U.S. supported Ethiopia's efforts to crush the Eritrea revolt for 15 years until a military junta deposed Emperor Haile Selassie and realigned the impoverished African empire with the Soviet Union. Since 1977, Moscow has provided Ethiopia with almost \$4 billion in sophisticated armaments for the country's 300,000-strong standing army. Despite this massive external support, Ethiopia has been unable to win the war in Eritrea. Today the government controls only the larger towns, while independence forces of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) control up to 85 percent of the countryside, where the bulk of the population lives. Ethiopia also faces major internal revolts in the northern regions of Tigray and Wollo, and in several pockets of the south.

During the past two decades, the Eritrea war has driven more than 500,000 Eritreans to squalid refugee camps in neighboring Sudan. It has also left the Eritrean economy in shambles and kept the remaining population in a constant state of social crisis. With as many as two million Eritreans now reeling from a five-year drought, the impact of the war on the relief effort is perhaps the most serious aspect of this spiraling human crisis.

A three-week tour of north, west and south Eritrea found starvation on the upswing everywhere. There is no sign of a recent harvest, and random visits to peasant households revealed no food reserves to last the hungry through November, when the next harvest is possible.

Throughout these areas, daily overflights by Ethiopia's Soviet-supplied MiG jets disrupt any semblance of "normal" economic and social activity, and extreme shortfalls in donated relief assistance cripple ERA's ability to provide emergency aid to the dependent population. Sporadic fighting in the densely populated Serai highlands of central Eritrea is also displacing thousands who are now migrating to the ERA camps in Barka. Recent Ethiopian army buildups in the government-held towns of Mendef-

era, Barentu and Asmara indicate that increased military activity here is likely in the near future.

Meanwhile, there is considerable evidence that relief assistance donated to the Ethiopian government for famine victims in Eritrea is being diverted for military purposes or sold on the open market. This comes at a time when ERA officials say they are receiving less than 5 percent of estimated needs from the international community.

Visits to ERA camps at Solomona, Zara and Sowa found conditions disturbingly similar to those at Hawasheit. Thousands of impoverished families huddle under spiked acacia trees in makeshift shelters of scraps of burlap, cardboard and plastic, hidden from aerial view but open to the wind and dust that blow across the rock-strewn plains constantly.

ERA relief convoys move through the area at night to avoid Ethiopian air raids, but spotchecks of written distribution records showed rising shortfalls of grain and a near absence of badly needed milk and protein supplements. A calculation of need based on district-by-district surveys in the highland region showed a dependent population there of close to one million with a monthly distribution target of 15,000 metric tons. Yet only a monthly average of 1,050 tons had been distributed between September and December.

ERA officials blame a disinformation campaign by Ethiopia's ruling military government and a lack of political will on the part of the international humanitarian community for this deteriorating state of affairs. Starving Eritrean civilians interviewed throughout a 2,000-kilometer journey expressed puzzlement and despair at the lack

of external response in the face of almost daily radio reports of food arriving in Ethiopia from around the world.

"If more help does not come soon, we will all die," remarked 78-year-old Mengistu Futour in the town of Shilalo as he showed observers the empty grain bins in his wood and stone house.

The added impact of the war was evident in the nearby town of Bademeh, where a December 11 Ethiopian air raid destroyed 139 houses and sent the 7,000 inhabitants into the surrounding hills for safety. Hot, dry and virtually empty during the daylight hours, this once thriving town is now a patchwork of rubble and loose grey ash.

On the outskirts of town, four people sat quietly in the shade of a stone wall around the local church. As a group they illustrated the cumulative effects of 23 years of war and half a decade of unrelenting drought. They included a 43-year-old widow who gathers firewood to sell for a living, a 45-year-old merchant whose shop is now open only a few hours each evening and whose wife was killed in the December attack, a formerly well-to-do farmer with no harvest in three years and a 19-year-old unemployed worker. All are now equally impoverished and totally dependent upon ERA for their survival.

"With all this, instead of solving our

If the Reagan administration is serious about saving lives, it must foster a just and lasting peace policy in the region.



This woman's child died of starvation just hours after this photo was taken.

problems by working day and night, we are forced to do nothing because of the bombardment," said Tabot Abraham. "Now I am simply sitting. There are no people, there is no work, and I am afraid."

Meanwhile, substantial quantities of relief supplies donated to the Ethiopian government are passing through Eritrean markets. In the border village of Girmaika, I counted over five tons of milk powder marked "World Food Programme, Gift of the EEC, for Free Distribution Only, Ethiopia, Reg. 2434/83—Lot D."

Girmaika merchants said similar quantities move through the village each week on camel caravans from the government-held town of Keren, where they are being sold by the Ethiopian military officers. Priced at \$(E)400 per quintal, the milk was too expensive for either local inhabitants or for the ERA, and most was apparently moving across the border to Sudan.

Ethiopian prisoners of war insisted repeatedly that they had been routinely paid by the government with donated relief grain in lieu of cash. Displaced Eritrean civilians said in separate interviews that the government has used more than 16,500 tons of donated Canadian wheat flour in the past two years to produce dry biscuits for the army at the Red Sea General Mills in the town of Decamare.

Regardless of the extent of Ethiopian corruption and misuse of aid, it is clear that little humanitarian assistance is reaching the overwhelming majority of famine victims in Eritrea at a time when starvation is rapidly accelerating, economic activity is at a standstill and no harvest is even possible for close to a year. Under the circumstances, ERA's evident success in spreading the impact of the famine evenly throughout the rural population has staved off massive loss of life, but a point has been reached where hundreds of thousands are on the brink of starvation.

The danger is that the death rate may soon climb throughout the embattled country so quickly that even a sharp increase in external assistance would be unable to keep up. Meanwhile, even a week-long disruption in the current effort would likely result in tens of thousands of immediate deaths.

While recent decisions by the Reagan administration to channel small quantities of emergency relief aid to ERA through private American aid agencies—notably the Seattle-based Mercy Corps International and New York-based Lutheran World Relief—represent a positive response to the immediate disaster, they fail to address the roots of the problem. Superpower competition for influence in Addis Ababa for the past three decades has left an entire people threatened with extinction. At present, open-ended Soviet military support for Ethiopia's self-proclaimed "socialist" military government is as much a cause of the current famine as lack of rain, but the U.S. also bears a special historical responsibility for the Eritrea crisis.

If the Reagan administration is serious about saving lives in Eritrea, the measure of this will be taken by the manner and extent to which U.S. policy fosters a just and lasting peace in the strife-torn region. The obvious vehicle for this is a concerted effort to raise the peace issues in the United Nations, which retains the legal responsibility for adjudicating the fate of Eritrea.

Meanwhile, the Eritreans need substantial help to rebuild their devastated land. For example, seeds, tools and draft animals must be supplied by April if there is to be any harvest in 1985. If private agencies and donor governments do not gear up for this immediately, the Eritrean population will become indefinite wards of the international community.

Dan Connell is the executive director of Grassroots International, a non-profit agency based in Boston, Mass., which is providing relief and rehabilitation assistance to famine victims in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. He recently returned from a three-week tour of opposition-held areas there.

INSHORT

Glitches at Greenham

About every two weeks or so, a convoy of 26 trucks and nuclear cruise missile launchers comes out of hiding from the Greenham Common base, 50 miles from London. Greenham is the home of the U.S. Air Force 501 Tactical Mission Wing, and whenever the cruise convoy appears, its British neighbors know that the Americans are busy practicing for nuclear war. But there were a few glitches in the top-security practice drill on January 16, writes Susan Jaffe.

First, some women from the Greenham Women's Peace Camp—now surviving its fourth winter—cut through the base's fence and made their way to the waiting convoy. One woman climbed into the driver's seat of a waiting launcher and attempted, unsuccessfully, to drive it away. (This bit of do-it-yourself disarmament is not such a far-fetched idea: in December some women broke into the base and drove an American bus nine miles across the base before they were caught.) Eventually the women were cleared away from the convoy, but no one was arrested.

When the convoy finally left on its mission, members of CruiseWatch took over, following the convoy in cars and alerting supporters by telephone that the Americans were coming. The cruise convoy was tracked about 100 miles to Salisbury Plain, an army training ground in southwest England, where antinuclear protesters attempted to disrupt the exercises. After three days of skirmishes, including a confrontation when one woman parked her car in front of a launcher and British police smashed its windows and wrestled a passenger to the ground, the cruise convoy returned to Greenham.

There, more than 100 demonstrators from CruiseWatch surprised the Americans in the early morning of January 22. After the convoy was ensconced in the base, some Greenham women broke in yet again, splattering the truck with red paint. No one was arrested for the clashes inside the base: it's said that the continual activity of the Greenham women would frazzle the British courts if every trespasser were brought before a judge.

Rainbow over Sierra

A lot has happened to Oakland's Sierra Designs Workers Union since its pre-Christmas boycott of Sierra Designs (see *In These Times*, December 19). Sierra, the manufacturer and retailer of recreational clothing and equipment, was planning on phasing out its Oakland plant this month in order to find even cheaper labor overseas. The jobs of 75 seamstresses (mostly Chinese, Filipino and Hispanic women) looked all but lost.

Sierra was stunned, though, when the multi-language workers banded together with the Plant Closures Project and started a boycott that began to hurt the image-conscious company. After three weeks of picketing at Bay area stores, a threatened demonstration at a Boston shareholders meeting and scores of telegrams to Charles Leighton, head of the conglomerate that owns Sierra, company officials sat down with the newly formed union and hammered out an agreement.

Sierra still refuses to keep the Oakland plant open, but has promised to help the workers start a cooperative. In fact, Sierra estimates that it will contract with the co-op for \$450,000 worth of production each year for the next few years. It's also promised to donate sewing machines and cutting tables to the seamstresses. And a recent sale at its Berkeley store netted \$28,000 for start-up capital—10 percent of the sale's gross. The new business—the Rainbow Cooperative—has a tough road ahead, but recent leads for a low-cost worksite and encouragement for additional funding from church groups, the National Co-op Assistance Fund and the city of Oakland may add up to stabler jobs in the future.

Creamless times at EEI

Edison Electric Institute (EEI)—a Washington-based trade group that often sides against environmental controls for utilities—will have less money for their lobbying when this year is up. Over the past 12 years EEI has been banking the money it's collected from member utilities and earning a hefty interest on it before turning it over to the Electric Power Research Group, a Palo Alto-based research organization. Last month EEI buckled under pressure from the Environmental Action Foundation and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and decided to stop "skimming" these



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SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



dues. EAF analyst Rick Morgan estimates that EEI has pocketed somewhere between \$14 and \$19 million in the past dozen years.

EEI is known for its lobbying against controls on utilities that burn high sulfur coal (thought to be a major component of acid rain), for its opposition to clean-up of toxic waste and for its attempted weakening of Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations on nuclear waste sites. Morgan says it's a good bet that much of the skimmed dues funded these lobbying efforts.

National work-a-day

Unless you're a tax resister (or unemployed), there's no easy escape from the fact that a large chunk of your

wages goes into a defense budget that's long on supporting puppet governments and short on defense. In fact, by some estimates as much as 100 days' pay of the average worker's salary has gone to feed the military budget since Ronald Reagan was first elected.

New El Salvador Today—a Berkeley-based campaign with Mayor Gus Newport heading up the board of directors—is calling on American straight thinking and largesse to turn the tide a bit. NEST is asking people to donate one day's wages to be funnelled to the guerrilla-controlled zones of El Salvador for agricultural and medical supplies. March 21 is the deadline for the campaign, planned to coincide with congressional deliberations on aid to El Salvador scheduled for that month. See the ad coupon on page 12 for NEST's address.

—Beth Maschinot

TAXES

Corporate tax reductions are undermining economic upsurge

TABLE

Corporate tax rates, investment and dividends, 1981-83

	Average Tax rate	% change Investment	% change Dividends
50 corporations with the <i>lowest</i> tax rates	-8.4%	-21.6	+14.1%
50 corporations with the <i>highest</i> tax rates	+33.1%	+4.3%	+10.7%

Source: "The Failure of Corporate Tax Incentives"

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS last week, President Reagan indicated that tax simplification is high on his second term agenda. He also proposed to maintain incentives for corporate capital formation. But two recently released studies of his administration's 1981 tax bill cast doubt on the central tenet of Reagan's economic theory.

According to that theory, the stagflation of the '70s was caused by excessive government intervention in the marketplace; therefore, the administration contended, the withdrawal of government—through tax reduction and deregulation—should accelerate economic growth. The administration has claimed that the current recovery has confirmed this theory.

But studies by Robert S. McIntyre of the Citizens for Tax Justice looking at how reduction in corporate taxes affected the economy suggest that the tax cut did not markedly benefit it. Indeed, it may even

be impeding the recovery by causing the deficit to spiral.

In a study released last October, "Corporate Income Taxes in the Reagan Years," McIntyre examined how the tax cuts had affected 250 "Fortune 500" corporations that had made a profit from 1981 through 1983. He found that 128 or 51 percent of the corporations had paid no taxes or received rebates in one of the three years. Seventeen corporations had paid no taxes or received rebates in each of the last three years, and five of these—General Electric, Boeing, General Dynamics, Lockheed, and Grumman—were major Pentagon contractors.

According to McIntyre, if the 250 companies had paid the statutory rate of 46 percent on profits of more than \$100,000, the U.S. Treasury would have gained an additional \$91.4 billion between 1981 and 1983. (The average rate for these corporations was 14.1 percent.)

But did the tax breaks result, as promised, in increased investment? In late January, McIntyre published a new study, "The

Failure of Corporate Tax Incentives," examining the investment behavior of those same 250 firms. He found that those 50 corporations receiving the largest tax breaks *reduced* their investment by 21.6 percent over 1981-83, while the 50 corporations paying the highest tax rates *increased* their investment by 4.3 percent. (The lowest 50 paid taxes at a negative rate of -8.4 percent—they received rebates—while the highest taxed paid at a 33.1 percent rate.)

The corporations with the largest tax breaks did increase their after-tax profits. They generally, however, did not use these profits for investment, but rather to increase their dividends to stockholders. Of the 129 firms that reduced their investment over 1981-83, 109 of them increased their dividends. For instance, AT&T paid only 1.1 percent in taxes on its \$31.4 billion in profits, but it reduced investment by 21.9 percent and raised dividends by 28.6 percent.

The corporations also used their profits to buy other companies. For instance, CSX Corp. had a negative tax rate of -0.9 percent on \$1.8 billion in profits, reduced invest-

ment by 38.4 percent, raised dividends by 18.4 percent and spent \$1.1 billion in 1983 to acquire the Texas Gas Resource Corp.

McIntyre argues from his data that corporate decisions to increase or reduce annual investment in plant and equipment are largely unrelated to tax policy, and depend instead on "demand-side market forces." Citing corporate reports from the 250 that he studied, McIntyre contends that those firms that increased their investment did so because of anticipated new demand and those that decreased it—like some energy and mining companies—did so because they foresaw no increase in demand.

McIntyre does not speculate about why Reaganomics has "worked"—that is, why economic growth upturned so sharply in 1984, but one can draw an obvious conclusion from McIntyre's study: namely that the upturn itself was not caused by the corporate tax cuts but by the sharp recession in 1982, the result of Federal Reserve policy, that depressed wages and widened profit rates, followed by the influx of new consumer demand that resulted from the Federal Reserve loosening the money supply, deficits and the consumer tax cuts.

One would not need to be a "supply-side economist" to predict such results—they follow from the despised theorems of John Maynard Keynes.

Meanwhile, if McIntyre's study is correct, the corporate tax reductions are not sustaining the upsurge but undermining it by increasing the deficit, which in turn keeps interest rates and the dollar's value high and prices American goods out of foreign markets. McIntyre estimates that if Congress were to go along with the corporate tax increases included in the Treasury Department's recent proposal, it could increase revenues by \$100 billion through 1990. But these provisions of Donald Regan's proposal will probably prove the most vulnerable as high-powered lobbyists like the American Council for Capital Formation's Charls Walker begin to work their magic on the administration and Congress.

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PERU

Pope John Paul warns against alien ideology

By Greg Heires & Larry Rich

LIMA, PERU

TWO THOUSAND JOURNALISTS flocked into Lima for Pope John Paul II's visit to Peru, the birthplace of liberation theology. The country celebrated for five days. Millions showed up to see and hear the Pope, often traveling hundreds of miles.

The government banned the sale of liquor during the visit, and the municipal government launched a campaign to clean up tons of garbage strewn on this city's streets. On February 5, the last day of the visit, a national holiday was declared. And even the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path, Maoist) guerrillas got in their two bits: the day after the Pope condemned terrorist violence, they blacked out Lima and burned a giant hammer and sickle on a hill overlooking the capital.

The Pope's pronouncements were listened to carefully. Last fall the Vatican had released a document containing "warnings" about liberation theology. Many church observers and journalists were awaiting a condemnation. But the Pope made no such pronouncement. In a country strapped by a \$13 billion foreign debt and experiencing a rapid deterioration of human rights, he seemed to embody hope for peace and an improved life for the poor, who have seen their real income slashed by 60 percent in the last decade.

In fact, if anything was condemned, it was the various forms of injustice that Peruvians suffer. For instance, in Cuzco, the former seat of the Incan empire, the Pope spoke to a massive crowd of peasants from all over the southern mountain region of Peru and gave his support for land reform measures and also attacked administrative corruption—an especially sore point between some government party officials and the bishops in that region of the country. The mention of land reform to the hundreds of thousands of peasants, garbed in the bright hues of their traditional dress, eli-

cited applause and cheers mixed with the sound of horns made of large sea shells.

But if social injustice was condemned, there were at least stern warnings about the form a Christian effort for what John Paul calls a "transformation of the world" might take. He did not go beyond a recent document issued by the Peruvian bishops on liberation theology—a "clarifying effort" as he termed it in a message to the Peruvian hierarchy.

John Paul echoed this theme several times in his address. Although roundly rejecting "class hatred" and class struggle, he inveighed with equal frequency against "alien ideology" that might replace or distort people's faith. For all his stained denunciations of "unjust social structures," John Paul sounded more like a social reformer than a revolutionary.

Still, his affirmation of the need for social change spoke to many Peruvians' daily struggle against economic oppression. In that sense, his words could be heard as an endorsement of what liberation theologians and many grassroots Christians have held for a long time: that religion must play a role in liberation of millions of poor, Catholic Latin Americans.

On the other hand, the Papal warning against deviation from proper doctrine will be used by the ecclesiastical right to support what they consider their apolitical grasp of Catholicism. The political right will be sure to make use of the political rhetoric in the current campaign leading up to the April presidential and congressional elections.

The Pope's speeches were sufficiently ambiguous to produce contradictory interpretations, summarized in the headlines of two Lima daily newspapers the day after the Pope arrived in the country. While the right-wing *Expreso* proclaimed, "The Pope says do not subordinate gospel to politics," the left *El Diario* wrote, "The Pope condemns social injustice."

The Pope's visit did not resolve the divisions in the Peruvian Catholic Church. At one point, the divisiveness surfaced publicly when a young man, speaking on behalf

of the youth active in the church, read a tampered version of a statement from the bishops' youth commission. The altered text complained about ideologies twisting young minds and the bishops' failure to correct the situation. Many youth attending the ceremony were visibly angered, and progressive church workers have speculated that right-wing ecclesiastical figures were responsible for the document's changes.

Many Peruvians anxiously awaited what the Pope would say in the Andean region of Ayacucho, scene of the government's military campaign against the *Sendero Luminoso*, who initiated their protracted people's war in the "countryside to the city" when Fernando Belaunde became Peru's president in 1980. Only 10 days before the Pope arrived in Peru, Amnesty International issued a special report documenting more than 1,000 "disappearances."

In his message in the Ayacucho airport, the Pope gave a strong plea for peace. He spoke of the social roots of violence, but, in statements directed to the *Sendero Luminoso*, criticized those who had chosen the path of armed struggle. Nevertheless, the Pope did recognize that many of the young guerrillas may have good motives in so far as they are searching for a "more just and fraternal Peru."

The Pope did not mention, however, human rights abuses by government and security forces. Last September the Peruv-

The Pope sounded more like a social reformer than revolutionary.

ian bishops released a statement that emphasized "terrorist" violence in the country and called upon government officials and the courts to investigate and act to stem the "tragic forced disappearances and illegal executions." The Pope quoted the document's plea that government officials instill confidence in the people, but he stopped short of directly singling out government human rights abuses.

Some Peruvian church figures, including Catholic University Rector Felipe MacGregor and Bishop Luciano Metzinger, suggested that the Pope may have decided not to comment for fear of disrupting Peru's fragile democratic structure. But the Peruvian church's Social Action Commission

The Pope's speeches were ambiguous and produced contradictory interpretations.

has documented more than 250 cases of disappearances, and through a "semi-official" human rights document and direct conversations with the Vatican, had informed Rome about the Peruvian situation prior to the papal visit.

Several church sources, including one close to the Social Action Commission, have speculated that the Pope failed to refer to the disappearances on the advice of the Archbishop of Ayacucho Federico Richter, who is known as a virulent anti-Communist. The mayor of Ayacucho, Leonar Zamora, told *In These Times* that she believed that the Pope had not mentioned the abuses because of "disinformation or lack of knowledge." She said that Richter had generally stood by in silence in the face of the violence engulfing the Ayacucho region, one of the poorest areas in Latin America.

Clad in black, Zamora had led a procession of the mothers of the disappeared by candlelight to the airport in order to present the Pope the key to the city. She had also carried a message about the human rights situation and a letter requesting economic support for a deaf-mute girl.

While human rights activists, including progressive church members, were either dumbfounded or angered by the Pope's failure to recognize government human rights violations, the reaction at the grassroots was mixed. Zamora said the mothers of the disappeared had been "consoled" by the Pope's pleas for peace while several church members reported that members of their parish—in some cases people who have experienced the violence in Ayacucho firsthand—took the Pope's pronouncement to be directed as much at the security forces as at *Sendero*.

On the other hand, an Irish priest, whose parish is in a poor district in Lima, along with many of his young parishioners said they were angered that the Pope had not directly acknowledged government repression. He said that several of the youths had little hope in the future and would now be more sympathetic to the guerrillas.

Concern about human rights is but one manifestation of liberation theology. Although the debate is often portrayed in abstract terms, the Pope's message to the people of Villa El Salvador (the Savior's City), a shantytown with a population of 300,000 dramatized that liberation theology is about something more than doctrinal issues.

In 1971 some 7,000 families stormed onto unoccupied desert terrain in southern Lima and established this new *pueblo joven*, or "young town," as the shantytowns were dubbed by the military government at the time. The invaders immediately proped up thatched huts. Today, about 60 percent have established homes made of brick and concrete. But 70 percent of the district is either unemployed or underemployed. Sixty-three of every 1,000 children die before reaching their first birthday. And tens of thousands rely on locally organized soup kitchens for meals because they cannot afford to cook for their own families.

The Pope addressed the crowd of up to two million from a large stage made of straw matting that bore the words "work, hunger, health." Before he spoke, a husband and wife delivered a joint message: "We are hungry. We are suffering. We are out of work. We are sick. With painful and broken heart, we see our expectant mothers with tuberculosis. Our children die, sons and daughters grow up weak and without a future."

The Pope followed with his address, in which he decried the enormous gap between the rich and poor. Then, departing from his text, he bid farewell to the sea of poor Peruvians, emotionally instructing them to be hungry for God but to do everything possible so as not to be hungry for bread.

The Pope's words were inspirational for hundreds of thousands of poor people in Villa El Salvador. But as he flew away by helicopter, the poor left behind in the shantytown knew that it rests on their shoulders to act on their faith in order not to be hungry for bread. ■

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

LAST MONTH, AS STARVING ETHIOPIAN children crowded the television screens, their main French benefactors, an organization of worldwide trouble-shooting medical men called *Medicins sans frontieres* (MSF), led a new ideological campaign in Paris against "Third Worldism."

The MSF, whose title points up the fact that they refuse to be stopped by national boundaries in their quest to succor Afghan guerrillas, boat people or famine victims, launched a new *Fondation Liberté sans Frontières* to discuss such problems as human rights with the same spirit of internationalist free enterprise. The new Foundation's first act was a well-attended colloquium entitled "Third Worldism in Question," which set out to demolish left-wing criticisms of existing North-South relations as the aberrations of yet another foolish "-ism."

Doctors are the human face of modern technology and their humanitarian image is the best short argument for the free access of the West to poor countries. Thus the *Fondation LSF* thus emerged as a strong propaganda vehicle for the right-wing in its current bid to profit from Francois Mitterrand's weakness, disastrous conditions in the Third World and Ronald Reagan's success in establishing the ideological hegemony of free market liberalism.

The colloquium papers accused Third Worldism (usually considered a marginal or dissident position in North-South relations) of actually inspiring "many of the principles governing North-South cooperation" and thereby bringing about "a catastrophic situation in the field of economic development as well as human rights." Named as guilty of Third Worldist "catastrophism" were writers René Dumont, Susan George and Frances Moore-Lappé, who have all criticized existing agricultural patterns and practices as leading to Third World famine. This amounts to the surprising claim that the catastrophic state of the Third World is the fault of the very people who have been predicting the catastrophe in the hope of averting it.

Gerard Chaliand can claim to have pioneered the critique of Third Worldism with his 1976 book, *Revolution in the Third World*. Chaliand, who had written admiring studies of national liberation struggles in Vietnam and Guinea-Bissau, concluded that utopia was not at hand in a world regulated by the relationship of forces, and moved into the booming field of "strategy," which looks at the Third World from another angle.

There are different kinds of Third Worldism. The kind Chaliand turned away from in the '70s was the idealization of armed struggle that tended to see the Vietnamese and Cubans as vanguards of a world Communist revolution. That Third Worldism was largely demolished in Europe by the wars among the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodians. The Third Worldism under attack at the Paris colloquium was something else.

Guilt trip.

Two years ago Peter Bruckner launched a much more scornful and comprehensive broadside with a book entitled *Le Sanglot de l'Homme Blanc* (the white man's "sobbing," as opposed to "burden") debunking Third Worldism as an unwholesome guilt trip in the Christian tradition. Bruckner's argument is a complicated and erudite version of the elementary moral dilemma that tends to fascinate 13-year-olds: isn't generosity just a form of selfishness if it affords satisfaction? Isn't plain selfishness then better because it is less hypocritical?

Chaliand and Bruckner were among the speakers at the Third Worldism colloquium. But it was France's most enthusiastic propagandist for an American-led Free World, Jean Francois Revel, who pointed out the real target when he described the Brandt Commission Report as an "example of Third Worldism in its purest form." The real target—because it is felt

as a real political alternative in Europe—is the approach to the Third World symbolized by former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's proposal to shift a portion of public expenditure from arms to development based on Third World needs.

The debate is important in so far as it may influence French public opinion and policy in a field where there are many decisions to be made. Jean-Pierre Cot, who was Mitterrand's first minister of cooperation until he ran afoul of certain vested interests in Francophone Africa, has suggested in a recent book that relations with the Third World may be the only area where France can act independently of the U.S. "In East-West relations, the situation is blocked. Yalta is there," he argues, and

Peter Bauer, an economist who reassured everyone that development funds are "no problem: people who can use capital productivity will always get it. They can borrow it at home or abroad."

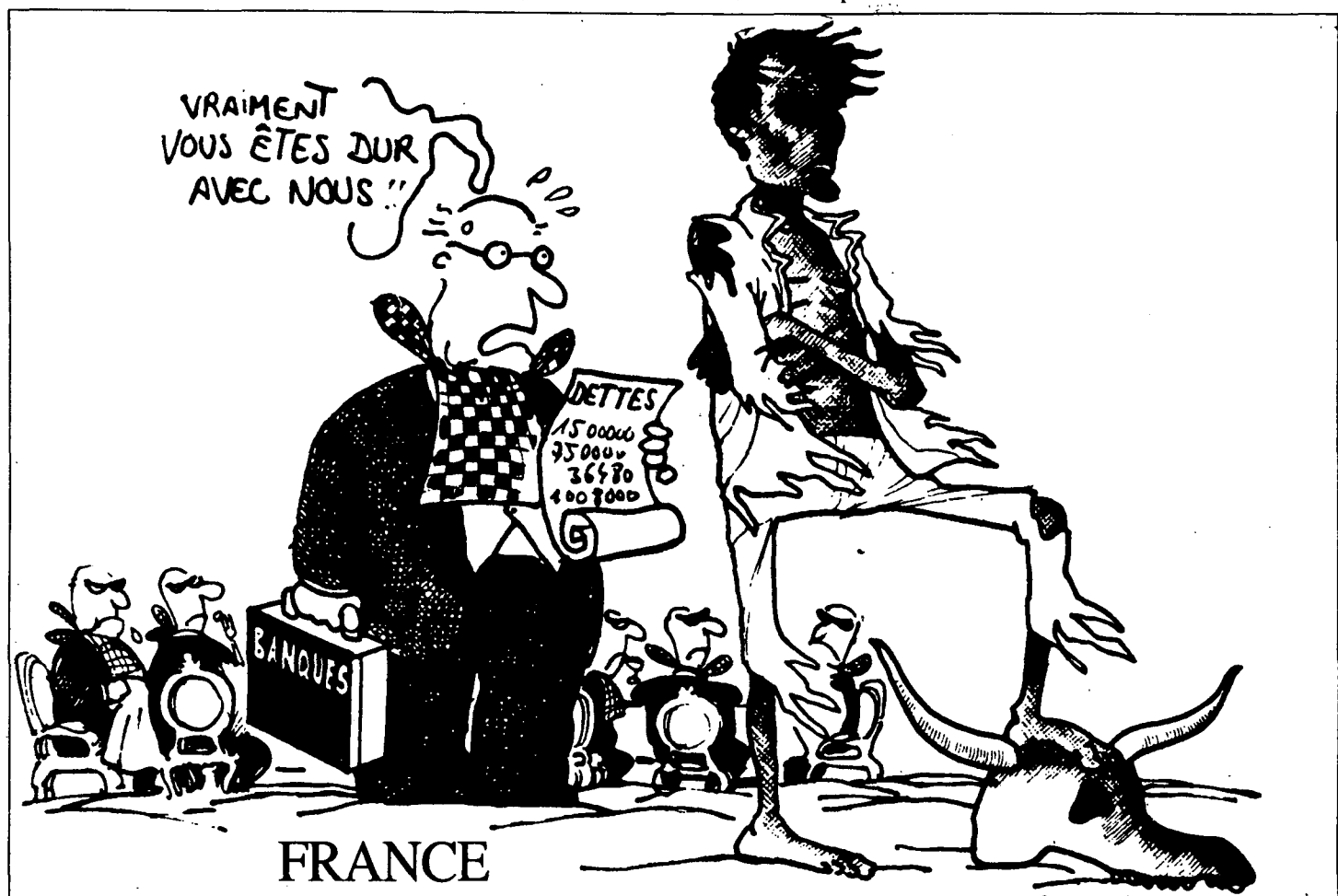
Another note was sounded by demographer Alfred Sauvy, who warned that European populations were aging, as life expectancy increased and birthrates declined, and this was what had led to the decline of Greece, Rome and Venice. This was all the more serious, he said, because a wave of immigration from the other side of the Mediterranean, where populations are exploding, was to be expected in 20 to 30 years.

The next day, another bilingual colloquium opened at the Sorbonne, this one spon-

IN THESE TIMES FEB. 13-19, 1985 7
lian tradition" that French conservatives ("liberals") want to project onto the U.S., hoping it will save them. Pfaff said it was "a trifle frivolous" even to try to relate U.S. liberalism to France, and suggested that the "rise of liberalism in France is a matter of the exhaustion of the left rather than the vitality of something new." Pfaff attributes this exhaustion to the fundamental success of socialism in Europe, which has "fulfilled its mission."

Three American missionaries of Reaganism were there to preach the gospel. U.S. Ambassador Evan Galbraith radiated

According to this cartoon, "Third Worldism" is guilty of suggesting non-payment of debts.



New offensive against "Third Worldism"

changes can be only very small and gradual.

But the South is where things are moving. Cot defends Social Democratic Third Worldism as a hard-headed political approach based on this analysis: the only way Europe can get out of its economic crisis is by developing North-South relations. Cot urges that France play a role in "consolidating nonalignment" in the Third World and gave as an example the French offer to sweep U.S. mines from Nicaraguan ports.

The attack on Third Worldism would attempt to reduce even that margin of independence. Part of the French right believes it can best defend its interests by attaching France to the Reagan approach to the Third World, with its stress on free enterprise and rapid deployment forces.

Certainly, with People's China turning toward capitalism and famine ravaging Ethiopia, whose all too standard military dictatorship proclaims itself "Communist," the time seems ripe to attack left-wing approaches to the Third World. In domestic affairs, the left is already on the defensive. A recent poll showed only 32 percent of French people describing themselves as on the left, compared to 42 percent in 1981, and today place themselves on the right.

René Dumont, ecological candidate for president in 1974, stood up in the audience at the colloquium and announced that after years of study, he had finally found out who was responsible for famine: himself! The colloquium, he said, was a political operation by "a new right in disguise."

Several senior French civil servants at the colloquium chortled in delight at the extreme free-market statements of the ec-

sored by New York University and devoted to an examination of what has become of ideologies today. French participants had obviously gathered mainly to celebrate the death of Marxism (again) and the triumph of liberalism (in its economic sense, Lord-Peter-Bauer-style) and had called in their Anglo-Saxon cousins to help. But since the Anglo-Saxon cousins this time around were not Hungarian but American, the mayonnaise did not exactly take.

Three American-style liberals were there to warn that the success of Reaganism had nothing to do with liberalism—not even economic liberalism—as understood by Europeans. Economist John Kenneth Galbraith attributed the current American prosperity to the Reagan administration's "return to Keynesian deficit financing at a level beyond any imagined before by the liberal left." Galbraith said he had trouble accepting the assumption that defense expenditures are not part of government spending. "As a conservative," he said, "I worry about the reduction of the government's role. Capitalism saved itself because regulation defused the 19th-century criticism. The welfare state has been conservative...."

Journalist Frances Fitzgerald told the French more than they wanted to know about the "moral majority" and the fundamentalist religious tradition that has resurfaced with Reaganism. In the fundamentalist view, she said, the world is not run by Hobbesian interests, but is a "battlefield between forces of good and forces of evil."

New York writer William Pfaff summed it up by reminding the French that what does not exist to any significant degree in the U.S. political spectrum is the "Toquevil-

confidence that Reagan's policies had found the simple answer to continuous economic growth. The main thing was to cut taxes and deregulate. "The snowball effect has begun," rejoiced Ambassador Galbraith, a former Morgan banker and *National Review* editor. "This will be the locomotive forcing statist governments in Europe to adopt liberal economic policy." Supply-side guru Jude Wannisky preached the relevance of his brand of economics for France, and even claimed that if supply-side ideas were applied to Africa, they could bring about an "end to global poverty."

Even more exotic to French ears than this radiant optimism was the crusading spirit of Joshua Muravchik of *Commentary*, who provided the surprising news that the "death blow to detente" came in 1973, when the Soviet Union encouraged the Arabs in the Mideast war. Muravchik acknowledged that we should not try to overthrow governments in Eastern Europe, because that could lead to war, but he suggested instead that we should overthrow Communist governments in other parts of the world, like Angola, where rebel groups are rising up. "This could be part of a new post-containment policy," he suggested, that would be "more militant about carrying the democratic creed to the world."

Jean-Pierre Cot, who is unusually familiar with the U.S., expressed alarm at Muravchik's "moral evangelism." It is something that "terrifies" Europeans, he said. Contradicting the prevailing assumption that liberalism is on the rise, Cot said that the crisis was squeezing out "liberal" tendencies in both the right and the left. The moral majority's campaign to reinstate prayers in the school and interfere in personal life is certainly not "liberal."

In France, Cot noted, the "liberal" strain of French socialism, the "second" or "liberal-libertarian" left (to which Cot has tended to belong) has been shoved aside, and "autogestion has disappeared from the vocabulary." The crisis, he said, is marked by the "disintegration of 'soft' ideologies."

By David Moberg

CHARITON, IOWA

OUTSIDE THE SMALL CORRUGATED steel central office of the Chariton Farm Machinery Auction, a warmly bundled knot of equipment dealers and a few farmers moved among the many rows of tractors, combines, grinders, cultivators and related paraphernalia of contemporary farming.

They were braving the arctic wind and snow to bid on the machinery. Much of it was offered for sale by other dealers or by farmers who needed to raise cash quickly to pay off loans or meet expenses. But nearly one-third may have come from farmers who were being driven out of business and

of the country have not been making money. More and more, they cannot even make payments on their debts, which now total \$225 billion nationwide. As land prices plummet, their equity vanishes, and skittish financial institutions grow increasingly reluctant to loan money—even the money needed to put crops in the ground this spring.

More of those institutions are joining the farmers themselves in a steady slide to the precipice: from December to January alone the number of banks in Iowa officially considered troubled climbed from 113 to 133. The federally chartered institutions—the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), Production Credit Associations and the Land Bank—are also feeling the pinch: nationally, the number of delinquent loans

in Iowa may fail.

Those grim statistics all assume that the present agricultural market and farm policies will not change significantly. But if the Reagan administration plan just submitted to Congress is adopted, the situation should worsen dramatically. The proposal from Agriculture Secretary John Block would quickly reduce price supports for major agricultural commodities as part of a "market-oriented" policy. According to a new projection of the effects of various farm policies by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, a market-oriented plan would reduce commodity prices by 15 to 20 percent. For wheat and corn, dollars earned per acre over variable costs would be halved. Since prices now are below the average cost of production, even

the equivalent of the failure of two Continental Banks, that could send disastrous shock waves through many major banks.

In future issues of *In These Times*, I will trace the roots of the crisis, the alternatives for public policy, the impact on small towns and rural life and the complex political upheaval that has been generated. There are six million farm residents in the U.S., and the vast majority of them are part-time small farmers who hold other jobs that often subsidize a losing farm operation. The farm crisis focuses not only on the 400,000 middle-sized farms but also increasingly on the 300,000 farms that gross more than \$100,000. These are the "family farms" of varied descriptions, but most involve an extended family who own (but increasingly also rent) the land that they farm.

The survival of these family farms is not simply a question of humanitarianism or nostalgia. Nor is it primarily an issue of bailing out the banking system. The question is what form of ownership and control society desires? Worker ownership and control is a longstanding ideal of Jeffersonian democracy that has found new support in recent years. When combined with a fair social regulation of production and price fluctuations, such dispersed ownership and operation of farms is vastly superior—economically and socially—to the alternative: increasing concentration of land ownership and corporate-style industrialized agriculture.

But the very "independence" that farmers cherish often leads them to support policies and politicians that would not only undermine their independence but their very existence. Confusion is as widespread as desperation. Most farmers hope against hope that they can hold on a little longer. A few, but a growing number, have begun to realize that mutual dependence and collective action may, ironically, save that independence and the farm.

At his peak, ruddy-faced Keith Schippers and his family farmed 927 acres of rolling land right on the dividing line between the rich fields of northern Iowa—the nation's number two agricultural state—and the hillier, less prosperous south. His problems began, he said, with a severe drought in 1977, which led him to borrow money to cover losses, followed by hail damage to

Disappearing Dreams

facing foreclosure. That included five tractors and a variety of other machinery that recently had belonged to Keith Schippers, a 39-year-old farmer from Prairie City, whose grandfather moved to a nearby Dutch community at the turn of the century.

Inside, auctioneer R.D. McWhirter, his curly hair bursting from beneath his cap, faced an angry, determined group of roughly 100 farmers and an equal number of United Auto Workers (UAW) members, many of them sometime employees of agricultural implement manufacturers. They were there to stop the sale of Schippers' equipment that had been repossessed by one of his lenders, the Production Credit Association. PCA is a government-chartered but now private and theoretically member-controlled bank that loans farmers money mainly to meet operating expenses until crops or livestock are sold.

McWhirter took the microphone. Nervously, he expressed an understanding of the protest but tried to put in a word for the lenders as well. "Mr. McWhirter," came a voice from the crowd, "you don't have to profit off the misery of others. You don't have to do the dirty work of the lenders. You're the middle guy." McWhirter tried to extend his sympathies to lenders and borrowers alike, but the chants of "Call PCA" grew louder and more insistent.

"All right, I will call PCA," he said. It was a quick call. "We have various farm and agricultural groups here that would like to have an answer to the Schippers sale," he told a PCA loan officer. "What would you suggest? Don't sell today? That will be good news."

There were cheers when McWhirter returned and pledged never to sell Schippers' equipment at public auction. Later that day, PCA officers—who claimed, not very convincingly, that they had not called off the sale because of the protest—gave Schippers another 15 days to come up with a workable plan. Whatever breathing space that gives Schippers, the protest highlighted the desperate plight of a growing number of medium and even large family farms. And it gave a boost to the burgeoning farm protests.

"What we have done here today is to take an extraordinarily strong step forward in the farm movement...of building a community of people on the land," protesters were told by David Ostendorf, a United Church of Christ minister who is a leading figure in the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition that had called the sale-stopper. "We have to give Iowa and the nation a message that we aren't going to take this any more."

And Schippers, after thanking McWhirter, told his backers, "We've got to change policies in Washington. We need a 1985 farm bill that will give us a chance to make money out here and get back on the land."

For several years most farmers throughout the Midwest and in many other parts

more than doubled from mid-1980 to mid-1984 to 35.4 percent. The dollar value of delinquent loans quintupled to 21.3 percent.

In the past two years the rate at which farms have been going out of business has doubled (roughly 3.6 percent last year, according to one bank survey). Formal bankruptcy rates have nearly quadrupled. Half of all PCA loans are now classified as substandard, doubtful or loss, according to Dan Levitas, an organizer for the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition.

Around 21 percent of Iowa farms now have so much debt in relation to their deflated assets—70 percent or more—that they are likely to fail this year, he said. Fifteen percent of Iowa farmers may not even get operating loans this spring. A recent survey by *Farm Journal* suggests that 42 percent of farmers in the north-central region are sliding toward insolvency and may not survive the next two to three years. By early 1986, the Farm Unity Coalition estimates, as many as 1,600 to 2,000 farms

more farmers would be eliminated quickly. Even with current price supports and an expanded international market, prices would not rise enough to help.

"Block calls it a market-clearing policy," says Marty Strange, director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska. "I call it farmer-clearing. They plan to eliminate 20 to 25 percent of farmers. They expect it and don't plan to do anything about it."

If they do clear the farmers, banks and other financial institutions will find themselves stuck with vast quantities of land and machinery. Many banks in Iowa that have forced liquidation have found sales returning less than 50 cents for each dollar loaned. As a result, banks increasingly hold the land and rent it to other farmers. Meanwhile, land prices are likely to continue to plunge this year, according to most experts.

In Iowa, farmland already dropped in value 28 percent from 1981 to 1984. But renting the land does not recover the bank's money. More and more there is talk of a collapse of the entire farm credit system,



his corn the next year. Then after a couple of slightly better years, he began renting 160 acres from a neighbor who was in financial trouble with a local Production Credit Association.

PCA officials persuaded Schippers in 1982 to take out what he thought was a contract with an option to buy. It turned out he was obliged to buy, he now says, even though he wanted to back out. But PCA was anxious to loan him money for operating expenses and a downpayment on the land. And like many farmers, he saw this new land as a start in farming for his teen-aged son.

The local PCA urged loans on him, even when he was reluctant, he claims. "They kept pumping it in to me," Schippers said. "I didn't want to borrow this money." Then they abruptly began pressing him to sell machinery and another farm. He believes they simply wanted to collect as much 15 percent interest as possible plus cover their earlier bad loan to his neighbor. In a lawsuit he has since filed, he claims PCA defrauded him.

With low prices for crops, the land was uneconomical. Schippers' problems were compounded when rains delayed planting, and then his corn was flooded in July 1982. In February 1983, PCA told him they were no longer willing to finance his operation since he had lost \$100,000 in 1982. (Schippers claims it was closer to \$60,000.)

PCA officials began showing up at the farm every couple of weeks to pressure him about the payments. "They asked me to sell my farm, my machinery and livestock and get a job in town," he said. The worries were compounded when the serious drought that summer hurt his crops.

Tensions built up in the family, especially between Keith Schippers and his oldest son, Brian, all too close in real life to the movie fiction of *Country*. The two came to blows at one point, and Brian moved out of the house. Schippers grew depressed. He thought about driving off a nearby bridge on his tractor. Then he saw an ad in *Successful Farmer* that gave the phone number of Rural America—a Farm Unity Coalition member now operating as Prairie Fire—to call for farmers pressed by financial institutions who felt stress.

"That's why he called," his wife Charlene said. "He thought he was going to go



Marc Pokempner

crazy and shoot himself."

"You feel like you're a failure and got nothing to live for," Schippers said. "I finally sat down and made up my mind I could do more good for myself and my family helping other farmers than blowing myself away or driving off a bridge."

This past year Schippers got feed, fertilizer and other supplies advanced by businesses. In July a friend told him he'd heard PCA was trying to hire another neighbor—a PCA client—to haul away Schippers' cattle. Schippers offered PCA his machinery, livestock and \$56,000 in federal disaster relief funds plus rewriting the remainder of his debt for a longer term, but PCA sent out the sheriff and trucks to pick up his equipment.

"The sheriff almost had tears in his eyes," Schippers said. "He said, 'I hate doing this. I worked with your father.'"

Four times last fall Schippers' attorney managed to block the sale. The sale protest gave him more time, but the main hope for preventing foreclosure on all his land and house appears to be his lawsuit.

For the past year and a half, Schippers has become an active participant in the Farm Unity Coalition. But his views on farm problems are a jumble. A supporter of Reagan in 1980, he now wears a button on his Moews seed cap, "Reagan takes from the needy and gives to the greedy."

At one moment in our conversation he said, "If we get a fair price for our product, we won't have to borrow money." Then a few minutes later he said, "To be fair to everyone, we should let the hammer fall wherever it may, and prices should float to wherever supply and demand [determine]." Yet he wants a floor price under grains and livestock to guarantee covering the cost of production. And later he said the only government program he supports is for soil conservation.

Partly the confusion reflects an amalgam of some ideas he's picked up from his new supporters in the Coalition with the old bromides of the free market. In farming communities there is often an automatic opposition to the government that is partly ideological, and partly the result of three decades of mismanaged farm policy after the Eisenhower administration dismantled successful New Deal policies and forced thousands of farmers off the land. Such conflicts are not unusual: an Iowa Farm and Rural Life poll showed strong farmer support for government action to save the small family farm and weak support for government action to boost farm prices—the most important measure the government could take to save such farms.

Farm protest is hindered not only by ideological muddle and the heritage of knee-jerk conservatism among many farmers but also by their notorious reluctance to act collectively. That was not always so,

In late January a successful equipment-sale protest gave Keith Schippers a little more time to save his farm. His long-range hope for preventing foreclosure appears to be his lawsuit.

as protests of the '30s and the rural socialism and populism of an earlier era testify. But farmers' political power waned after World War II, and the culture of agriculture was stamped with a business mentality. "They always want you to get their neighbors to join first," said longtime National Farmers Organization member Andy Riniker, "and then you might not get them."

By historical standards that compare purchasing power of farmers and urban workers—referred to as parity—farm prices in the past few years have been even lower than in the Great Depression, and a higher percentage of farmers are losing their farms now. But unlike the Depression, the farm crisis has not been felt uniformly. Farmers with low debt loads who have not relied exclusively on grain sales and have had good weather have survived without great distress.

"We're getting along," said one such Des Moines area farmer looking for bargains at the Chariton auction. "We're just not buying CDs like we used to."

As a result, farmers are more likely to be divided and picked off one by one. In Keith Schippers case, several neighbors pitched in to help him make it as far as he has. But one next-door neighbor has vocally complained that if Schippers gets help from the PCA, other borrowers like herself will have to pay for it. And other neighbors maintain that Schippers is in trouble because he is not a first-rate farmer.

Yet even the most successful can see a threat. Merritt Van Roekel, 48, farms 1,500 acres just north of Schippers with the help of two sons. Although he took a half-million dollar loss on the closing of an implement dealership last year, he made money in 1983. He sees the farm protesters as people who "shouldn't be in farming anyway." But he also says, "There definitely has to be something done. It's going to be a disaster if something isn't done. There won't be 50 percent of us around next year." The bank of one neighbor, regarded as a good manager, recently called in his loans simply on the grounds that his land had dropped in value on paper.

Lending institutions, especially the PCAs, contributed to their own problems, Van Roekel argued: "They had money for anything. They encouraged people to put up confinements (large hog-raising buildings) that weren't even in the hog business." Such aggressive—or irresponsible—lending caught Schippers.

Van Roekel inherited land, then bought a farm every couple of years in the early

'60s when land was \$400 an acre. In recent years he bought some land for prices as high as \$3,400 an acre (which might now sell for \$2,000), bringing his debt to 30 percent of assets. That is historically high but not threatening. Yet Van Roekel has drastically cut back purchases of new machinery. In the past, inflation boosted the value of his used equipment for resale. "We farm a lot of land with little labor," he said, explaining his old ways. "We can't afford breakdowns."

"I sympathize with the family farm," he said, "but a family farm to me is a lot different. Some people call 160 acres a family farm. But you can't make it. You'll need a couple thousand acres. We'll have to get bigger to survive, but I just don't think bigness is the answer."

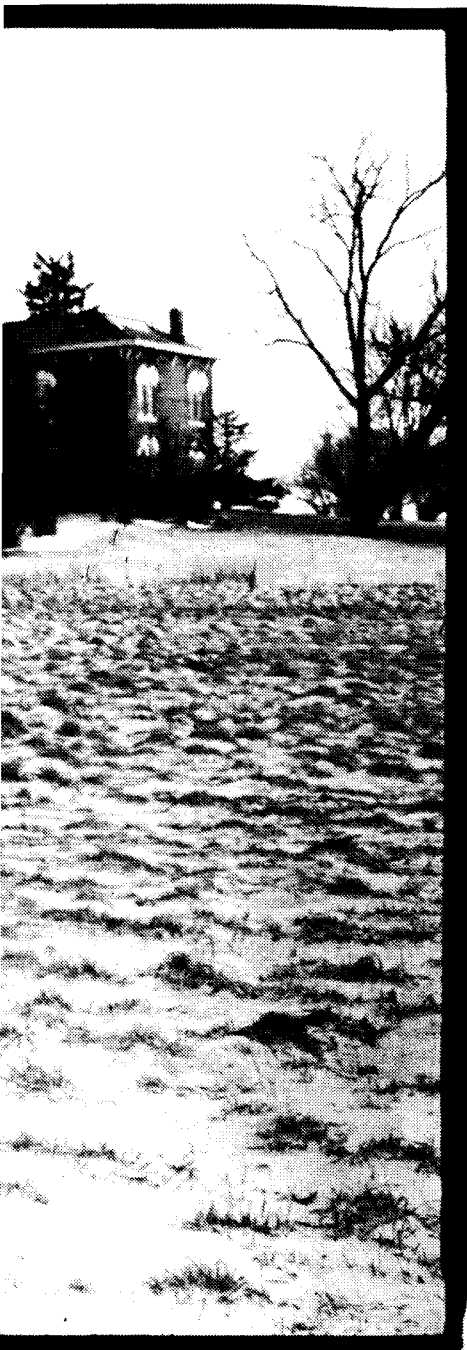
Melvin Schneider confirms much of Schippers and Van Roekel's criticism of the PCAs. He was in a position to know. He worked as a loan officer for 15 years, quitting in disagreement with the agency in 1977. Especially after the mid-'70s, management of the agency—which gained a stronger upper hand over member-directors with the 1971 Farm Credit Act—discouraged long-term relations between loan officers and farmers, according to Schneider.

"It was up or out," he said. "They had young guys, and their only goal was to make new loans. They got beyond the new wealth production of the land and went to the inflated value of land. Their salaries would jump from \$30,000 to \$60,000 since it was tied to loan volume and not to quality. How big your office was in value determined how big your salary was."

Supervision of loans grew sloppier, he said. At the same time the Federal Land Bank began issuing variable rate loans that were issued at a manageable 8 percent but have now ballooned to around 13 percent. For many farmers half of total operating cost now goes to interest payments alone, Schneider said. Many of the people in trouble expanded not out of speculation and greed as much as the desire to pass on a farming operation to a son. Currently he is counseling three farmers over 75 whose farms are being foreclosed. In each case they were trapped by trying to help their sons start farming, much as Schippers tried. Their cases point to another, little-appreciated dimension of the farm crisis: when a farmer loses his land, he loses not only his job but also the equivalent of his pension.

With their rapidly changing staff of young MBAs—more bad arithmetic, according to Schneider—the PCAs and Land Bank encouraged big farms and ignored the special financial considerations of a family farm, which might have to support a serious illness or other tragedy. Now both the farmers and the lenders are suffering.

Continued on following page



Continued from preceding page

"I think the PCAs and the Land Bank are going to fold financially unless the federal government recapitalizes them," Schneider said. "I look for the system to more or less collapse. But farmers are going to sit right on their farms. They may not put any crops in, but they are not going to move. How are they going to move them? There will be so many it would take an army."

Farmers are steadily building a protest army of their own. Jim Findley was a hesitant participant in the stop-the-sale action. He doubted that farmers could unite to accomplish anything. But his brother John, a part-time truck farmer and locomotive engineer, was more enthusiastic. An active union member. John argued for a "coalition of laborers and farmers," and was inspired by the sense of strength he felt in a protest at the capital earlier this year.

But Jim is discouraged. Although he works part time and his wife works as a registered nurse, their 250-acre farm is not panning out. He has been cautious, accumulating little debt, not buying expensive machinery. Yet "there's no way I can make a living off the farm. I don't care if they own the land, it can't be done. I have a neighbor who owes nothing on the land but has been losing money on his cattle operation. Now half his farm is up for sale. I showed a profit two years ago, the second time in nine years. When my dad was farming he owned a new car every two years. He had six kids. I can't afford even a cheap, old car. Any money I make goes back into farm debt. It's getting tighter all the time."

For Elmer Steffes, things are about as tight as they can get. He decided to join the protest to be with some "positive-minded people." After three years in chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, he has been forced into bankruptcy after 20 years of farming. His own crisis was precipitated when two sons, one 20, the other 16, died

in 1979 from leukemia. "There were too many bills that didn't get paid on Main Street," he said. "Then the high interest rates killed me." Debt climbed to 70 percent of his net worth, and "we lost our 30 percent with a pencil real fast. They took my equity away. But now they're losing, too. The thing that's happening now is getting further out of control than they like to admit."

"Nobody's got no more positive feelings," he complained, somehow still managing a smile. "Banks are negative. Everyone's negative. Farmers are optimistic. Farmers all have dreams. They wrecked our dreams, that's what they did. Once they get you out of dreaming, they take away your self-worth and get you depressed. I had a grade A dairy herd, and they took that away the other day. Last week they took my equipment. Now I won't have anything coming in next week. I'm sick and going to take it easy a few months. I've been through the grieving process so often. I'll come back stronger."

A longtime farm organizer who came out once again for Schippers, Andy Riniker, 62, has survived a lifetime on the farm. He does not have a heavy debt on land, but since 1980 he has lost money every year, gradually increasing his operating debt.

"The farmer isn't being subsidized," he says. "The farmer has subsidized the consuming public. Because of low prices, the farmer can't cover the costs of production. So next year he borrows against equity, and then they foreclose like they did against this man, Schippers. If he'd got fair prices, he wouldn't be here. I could see it happen to me in four years if it keeps going as it is. It's like a progressive cancer."

Dennis Lorence, a union steward from the J.I. Case factory in Burlington, was on a three-month layoff. He had a direct self-interest in joining the sale protest. "People got to realize if farmers go strong, they create jobs for everyone else," he said. "They go out and buy farm equipment, appliances. There's just one big chain reaction, if the farmer goes. If we all unite,

farmer, laborers, working class of people, we can get this country turned around."

Why weren't more farmers present? "I'll tell you why they're not here," John Findley said. "They don't know what policy to follow. And they don't realize the power they have if they're together."

"What we're asking is for you to join one another," Dan Levitas told the group of 75 farm men and women gathered in the basement of the First Methodist Church in Red Oak, a county seat in southwestern Iowa. He was there, as part of his work with the Coalition and Rural America, to form a local Farm Survival Committee as the Coalition has already done in half the counties of the state. On the other side of town, by chance, local business people were gathered in the Holiday Inn to discuss how they could survive the farm crisis.

After cataloging the horrors of the price and credit crunch and the devastation of rural and small town life that will follow, Levitas urged those present to demand that the governor or legislature declare a state of economic emergency. Under a Depression-era law, that would permit a farmer to go to court to postpone a pending foreclosure on land for a year. "That doesn't mean the banks will go broke and stop lending," he said, anticipating objections, "because they went broke and stopped lending about three months ago."

As more banks fail, farmers face a new antagonist—the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), he warned. When the FDIC takes over a bank, it sells the bank and its good loans as soon as possible. Three-fourths or more of the average small bank's load of 200 farm loans are turned over to FDIC for collection. "We're a liquidator, not a lender," FDIC officials say, according to Levitas.

"And within three to six months 150 or so farmers will be cut off income, their land and machinery repossessed," he added. "They pick off one farmer at a time. All money goes to FDIC, leaving nothing for living expenses. One FDIC representative said to a farmer, 'You work to see how much you can keep, and we work to see how much we can steal.'"

Financial institutions are becoming much more desperate, according to David Ostendorf, director of Prairie Fire, formerly the Midwest Office of Rural America. First, the FmHA, traditional lender of last resort, put the screws to farmers. Now the PCAs and the Land Bank are stepping up the pressure.

"Nobody's unaffected any more," he said. "Size doesn't matter. In the last six months banks and the Land Bank have been going after people with equity base left, calling in the loans even when they haven't missed a payment. One day Sen. Grassley came in. A woman from eastern Iowa was on the hot line. She said the bank had confiscated her savings and checking accounts, and they were not late on payments. It exercised the 'right of offset' even though they weren't delinquent."

As the PCAs got tough about 18 months

ago, they added 2 percent to loans of farmers in greater trouble—making it even harder for them to escape. Schippers was simply one of many farmers whose rights may have been ignored. But Schippers was active in the coalition and ready to make his case public. Ostendorf did not scrutinize Schippers to see if he passed muster as an irreproachable farmer.

"When we first began this, all we heard was that guys in trouble were bad managers," he said. "Those are irrelevant issues for us for the most part. The issue is whether farmer X is getting a raw deal from lenders or treated badly by government policies or markets.... Keith and others had rights to forbearance, to reamortize. But PCA never informs people of their rights. They simply come in and say, 'You need to liquidate this land or do X, Y or Z.' We say to people, 'You have options.'"

Schippers was also ready to fight. "A lot of farmers don't have the fight in them," Ostendorf said. "You work with people who give their okay. We can't just go with rogue bands through the countryside stopping sales."

Ostendorf is intent on stopping other sales, too—sales of farmland to corporations. With farmland prices depressed, many business interests want to repeal Iowa's restrictions on non-farm corporations owning land. They argue new capital infusion will bid prices up. But the record on land prices in the Midwest is no better as a rule in states where corporations can own land than in those, like Iowa, where they can't. Corporate buying may have contributed to a boom and bust in some states, like Nebraska, which recently restricted corporate holdings.

"The danger is they'll use the opportunity to smash things set up to protect family farmers," Ostendorf explained amid the creative chaos of a small office filled with farmers and other visitors, while the hotline phone rang regularly.

"There's the whole issue of corporate control of the food system from ground to grocery store. The issue is concentration of capital."

One ominous signpost toward greater corporate control is the growth of contract farming. Increasingly, hogs and steers are reared in very large confinement buildings or feedlots or else farmers are paid a flat—and usually very low—fee to raise animals for a packinghouse. Diversified farms disappear—farmers specialize in raising just corn or soybeans or hogs. With such specialization, the soil and surrounding environment are usually degraded.

Corporate domination of agriculture is not new. A few large grain companies dominate international trade. Large corporations in fairly concentrated industries control most of what goes into agriculture and processes and markets what comes out. But the squeeze on the farmer continues to the ultimate benefit of those same corporations.

Meanwhile, the farmer dreams of "independence" and works a little longer, a little harder—ending up deeper in debt and, eventually, off the land.

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LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

TWICE BAFFLED

TWO COMMENTS ON JOHN JUDIS' "SOCIALISM: WHO KNOWS WHAT IT IS?" (ITT, Jan. 23). First, I am rather baffled by Judis' claim that American socialists are not debating "the nature of the goal we are committed to." My impression is that a fairly lively debate is being conducted on precisely this question. Judis devotes considerable (and doubtless deserved) space to Alec Nove, but ignores American proponents of market socialism like Leland Stauber (and since Stauber's work has appeared in *In These Times*, simple ignorance on Judis' part would not seem to be the explanation). Certainly any reader of *Dissent* knows that American socialists are not contenting themselves, as Judis would have it, with "vague or utopian conceptions of socialism." I would refer Judis to Irving Weinstein's "Market Socialism: A Program for American Socialists" (*Dissent*, Winter 1981) and to Robert Heilbroner's discussion of Nove (which anticipates some of Judis' points) in "A Feasible Vision of Socialism" (*Dissent*, Fall 1983).

Second, I believe it is wrong—and arguably defamatory—to imply, as Judis does, that DSA is primarily a "social club." This is one of the most ridiculous accusations against DSA that I have read in recent years.

—Louis F. Cooper
Bethesda, Md.

WRITE ON

AS ONE WHO SHARED THE NEW AMERICAN Movement experience in the early '70s and who presently represents the "left" on the federal council of Canada's New Democratic Party, let me congratulate John Judis for his thoughtful article, "Socialism: who knows what it is?" (ITT, Jan. 23).

Clearly, the North American left has not paid sufficient attention to defining and popularizing a democratic socialism that, on one hand, goes beyond the economics of capitalism and, on the other hand, is sufficiently pluralistic and decentralized to protect against the dangers of a rigid and authoritarian planned economy.

The socialist political economy that Judis advocates is hardly limited to the important writings of Alec Nove. The alternative economic strategies developed by the British Labour Party are quite suggestive and the economy of Austria, while by no means a perfect model, is a reasonable example of such a market socialism. A practical socialist politics must do more than advocate a more progressive manner in which to manage capitalism. Yet our proposals to transcend capitalism must be both attractive and realistic. John Judis is helping to steer us in a useful direction.

—Simon Rosenblum
Sudbury, Ontario

ONE WAY

JOHN JUDIS' ARTICLE "SOCIALISM: WHO KNOWS WHAT IT IS?" (ITT, Jan. 23) made some very good points. A Social Democratic greenhorn from Northern Europe, I have never understood what the big deal is. After five minutes in this country, one sees clearly what is needed here: more of what they have there. I am thinking of occupational safety, con-

trols of corporations, consumer protection, health care, public jobs, transportation for the handicapped and so on and so on. In Sweden only party officials talk about "socialism" and "the working class": the Jimmy Higginses (Sven Svenssons) are busy muddling through the thick Party Congress Motion Book listing hundreds and hundreds of reforms suggested by the party members.

Democratic Socialism is a direction, not necessarily a goal. Wasn't it Bernstein who said that a revolution is only a whole pile of reforms happening at the same time? I guess I have it rather easy since I grew up with this stuff and only have to think of how things are back home for my "ideological" direction. I have come to the conclusion that the best champions for the directions I want are Common Cause, Americans for Democratic Action, Public Citizen, Institute for Policy Studies and, yes, the League of Women Voters.

Gore Vidal said it best, when asked if he was in favor of socialized medicine: "I'm in favor of red, white and blue, free enterprise medicine, paid for by the government." Americans are as prejudiced as the Swedes: if you asked a Swede if she was in favor of capitalist medicine, she would ask you to jump to hell.

Finally, I do think one should be a member of Democratic Socialists of America if one is indeed a socialist, if nothing else to be counted and also because it's gotta be the cheapest way to join the Socialist International!

—Eva Ollen
Rochester, N.Y.

POINTED

I GROW INCREASINGLY OFFENDED BY ATTACKS ON REAGAN'S CREDIBILITY BASED ON HIS HEARING LOSS, SUCH AS THE WAGNER CARTOON (ITT, Jan. 30) depicting the inauguration with Nancy Reagan echoing the lines of the oath so Ronnie can hear and repeat them.

Reagan's hearing impairment seems to be an easy target for bitter jokes. But participating in the "fun" of criticizing him on this basis helps perpetuate the very real discrimination other hearing impaired people experience. Deaf and hard of hearing people know too well the injustices of being viewed as stupid or funny or incompetent solely because of their hearing loss. Focusing such attitudes on Reagan serves no political end. In my mind, it only discredits the critics who do so.

Reagan's credibility has nothing to do with the fact that he needs help to hear. It is what he says and does—not how he hears—which is so dangerous and wrong and which must be emphatically illuminated and protested.

—Holly Church
Minneapolis

Editor's note: As we read the cartoon it had nothing to do with Reagan's hearing, but was a reference to his need for prompting.

OUTSTANDING

JOAN WALSH'S COVERAGE OF THE MENTALLY ILL HOMELESS IS AN OUTSTANDING PIECE OF WORK (ITT, Jan. 23) that surpasses any other coverage I've seen in its vivid writing, its sympathy for the victims of deinstitutionalization and its grasp of the history of the movement.

As a teenager in a rural Western state,

I had the opportunity to see how deinstitutionalization's full development was stunted. The state pushed the responsibility for care and housing of the mentally ill onto the counties, offering very little in the way of financial help. With some federal aid, county commissioners were persuaded to fund clinics, but the promised housing and community-based residential treatment was made available for teenagers only, or frequently for no one.

Walsh captures the optimism and good intentions of those who worked hard to close the warehouses for the mentally ill—and the failure of our society to provide a humane alternative.

—Gretchen Donart
Brooklyn, N.Y.

GOLDMAN LETTERS

I WISH TO POINT OUT AN ERROR IN MARIO BUHLE'S OTHERWISE PROVOCATIVE REVIEW OF THE EMMA GOLDMAN BIOGRAPHIES (ITT, Jan. 23).

Emma Goldman: An Intimate Biography does not depend upon the letters discovered in 1975 in a Chicago guitar shop. These letters represented a small addition to the massive collection of Goldman-Reitman correspondence deposited earlier at the University of Illinois at Chicago by the Reitman family. The first batch of Reitman papers acquired by the library in 1969 contained nine folders worth of Emma's letters to Ben. The largest group of Reitman-Goldman love letters—49 folders worth—now contained in Supplement II to the Collection—was acquired from Mrs. B.M. Reitman in 1972.

The letters discovered in 1975—now included in Supplement IV—were essentially similar in content to those already available at the library and were unimportant for my study. The presence of Goldman letters in the Reitman Collection was indicated for the first time in the 1970 volume of *The National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections* (1971), which is where I first learned of them.

—Alice R. Wexler
Riverside, Calif.

ONE MAN'S LIBERALISM

SALIM MUWAKKIL'S "BLACK LEADERSHIP DOWN BUT NOT OUT" (ITT, Jan. 16) is a thoughtful but flawed critique of the search for new directions among black leaders. Increasing emphasis must be given to economic development in black communities, but this has been evident

for a long time and the case for it does not rest on any assumptions about the alleged failure of "liberalism."

If Muwakkil intends to discredit the liberal record by such comments as "...an increasing body of statistics point out that black Americans gained very little during liberalism's philosophical reign," he ought at least to make clear what body of data he has in mind and how far back he wishes to trace the reign of liberalism. Muwakkil refers to "emerging data" that "...increasingly reveals...discouraging failures" of liberal programs. This is of course the message Charles Murray would have us believe in *Losing Ground*. Does Mr. Muwakkil wish to support the thesis of that book?

Yes, black America needs more and better jobs. So do the white poor. But it is obvious that no amount of economic development can assure a decent standard of living for all. Some cannot participate in the labor force. Others will earn below poverty wages even in the best of times. Current liberal programs are not adequate, but discrediting the idea of wealth redistribution surely will not help create the climate necessary for decent redistributive measures.

Wealth creation is essential, but in any just social order more equitable distribution of income and wealth is also necessary.

—John M. Romanynshyn
Professor Emeritus, University of
Southern Maine, Portland

Salim Muwakkil replies: Although the amount of public assistance given to unemployed and underemployed blacks has about doubled since 1964, the bottom stratum of the black community (the underclass) has expanded and become more entrenched. One of the reasons for this seeming paradox is black leadership's absolute reliance on the tactic of "clientism."

Instead of placing an equal emphasis on marshalling community resources and utilizing successful indigenous approaches to build upon the strengths of the black community, black leadership of the recent past has focused almost entirely on petitioning the government. My article merely suggested a balance be struck.

CORRECTION

Due to a production error, a paragraph in Harold Baron's article was decapitated. It should have begun as follows: "This dialectical dialogue between the two world views continues into a concern for maintaining the culture of solidarism...."

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PERSPECTIVES

The Mormons in Latin America



By Bob Gottlieb & Peter Wiley

MOST AMERICANS KNOW the Mormon church, or Church of the Latter-day Saints, either through the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the church's poignant television commercials or the polite knock on the front door of its youthful missionaries.

The growth in membership of the Mormon church since World War II has been one of the great success stories of American religion. During these years, church membership quintupled, going from less than one million to five million plus in 1983.

The largest part of this growth can be attributed to the church's huge international missionary program. The Mormons have even penetrated the Iron Curtain, savoring the irony of a church known for its anti-Communist leaders with plans to open a new temple this year in Karl Marx Stadt in East Germany.

In recent years, however, this impressive program has experienced a number of quiet crises, particularly in Latin America, the church's most successful recruiting ground. These crises were followed in 1980 by the beginning of a decline in the number of missionaries and then by an annual decline in the number of converts. The number of missionaries fell from a high of almost

30,000 in 1980 to 26,850 in 1983. The number of converts fell from 224,000 in 1982 to 189,419 in 1983.

Church membership does continue to grow at an impressive rate. But the Mormon church, like most churches, tends to play the numbers game. That is, the church counts every breathing soul that can possibly be counted as a Mormon rather than active members. The number of overseas members is particularly inflated. According to numerous missionaries, foreign Mormons often come and go very quickly.

According to church spokesman Jerry Cahill, the number of converts declined because the church for a time reduced the length of missionary tours from two years to a year and a half. The decline in the number of missionaries, Cahill said, reflects church demographics, meaning a smaller pool of young members to draw on for missionaries.

The successes and problems encountered by Mormon missionaries are illustrative of the tribulations faced by other churches, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose growth in membership is due to the use of aggressive recruiting techniques both here and overseas. They also illustrate the problems more conservative American churches are having with their traditional rival, the Catholic church, many of whose members in Latin America have embraced the activist organizing strategies of liberation theology.

The spiritual and political ambience both in the U.S. and Latin America is conducive to the rise of highly-structured religious groups. But the underlying social tensions, particularly the pitfalls of Latin nationalism and class antagonism, have placed the Mormons and other missionaries in a precarious position.

The Mormons, since the formation of their church in 1830, have considered the Pacific Basin and Latin America their special provinces. According to the Book of Mormon, the peoples of these regions are Lamanites or the descendants of the family of ancient Hebrews who crossed the Pacific before the birth of Christ to found many of the pre-Columbian civilizations. For years the Lamanites fought with their brethren, the Nephites, for which they were condemned to being "dark and loathsome" and a fallen civilization. A central mission of the church is to bring the gospel to these fallen Lamanites, who are also the Indians of the Americas.

Latin American Mormons.

Preaching the doctrine of the Lamanites, the church has experienced notable successes in Latin America in recent years. Of all foreign countries, Mexico has the largest Mormon population (238,889) dating back to the late 19th century when the church established colonies and a refuge for polygamous members in the northern state of Chihuahua.

Beyond Mexico, membership in Latin America has grown most rapidly in countries, such as Chile and Guatemala, where

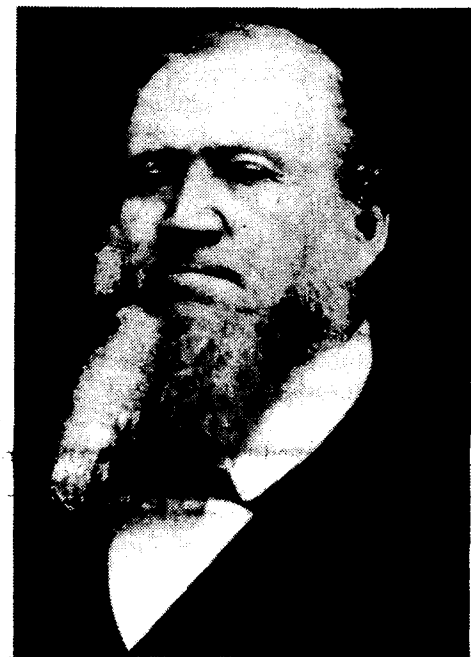
local church leaders, with or without the knowledge of church leaders in Salt Lake City, have worked out an accommodation with highly repressive military regimes. In other countries, such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, church activities have been curtailed because local leaders ran afoul of revolutionary forces.

The Mormons count Chile as their greatest current triumph. Upset for a time by the number of members who supported the presidency of socialist Salvador Allende one church official told a church interviewer that "the Lord played a great part in the overthrow of that Communistic government" in 1973. Since then church leaders have urged members to turn away from politics to the gospel.

Several years later the Chilean mission president, after an effort to recruit local leaders with "a certain political leaning or affiliation," told another church interviewer that members overwhelmingly supported the military regime of Augusto Pinochet, which "fell in line, of course, with the teachings of the gospel."

In Central America, the church has grown rapidly under the brutal military regimes in Guatemala, but has been forced out of El Salvador by anti-government guerrillas, who reportedly called church leaders

Brigham Young (below); Latter-day Saints Church founder Joseph Smith Jr. receiving a vision (left)



in and gave them 48 hours to leave the country. In Nicaragua the church curtailed its activities after the Sandinista government accused some of its members of being CIA agents. Mormons too have shown up among the guerrillas, some proclaiming that the Book of Mormon describes a glorious future for the indigenous peoples of the area.

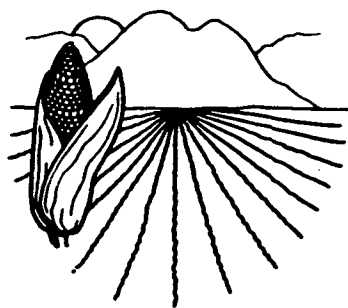
The church's antidote to the problems of social upheaval has been to develop more local leadership. Cahill pointed out that the church now has 7,000 foreign missionaries and missionary training facilities spread throughout the world. The overwhelming majority of mission presidents, however, still come from the Mormon West.

The Mormons' penchant for centralized control and doctrinal purity means that the church, despite its efforts, still appears to many foreigners as an American church imposed from the outside, a problem that took the Catholic church hundreds of years and many native lives to overcome.

©Points West

Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, co-authors of *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power*, write a regular column on the West.

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Brazil at the Precipice

April 13-28, 1985

In Brazil, the economy, the ecology, and religion are three issues that are inextricably intertwined. As its natural resources are being developed and depleted, massive population shifts are taking place. Migration toward the urban centers continues in huge numbers despite the lack of employment to be found there. The resulting conditions present a background to the church's call for an "option for the poor," the challenge of Liberation Theology. We will see problems of industrialization as well as the seeds of solutions to those problems.

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Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds

By Lois Palken Rudnick
University of New Mexico Press,
348 pp., \$19.95

By E. Kay Trimberger

MOST HISTORIANS OF the American left in the 20th century, and most analysts of modernist movements in art and literature, devote a paragraph, a few pages to Mabel Dodge Luhan. Lois Rudnick is the first, however, to write a serious biography. She is also the first to present an analysis of why Luhan inspired such negative and hostile reactions from many men who were her contemporaries and from later interpreters. Based on extensive archival research, Rudnick explores Luhan's achievements and failings from an implicitly feminist perspective.

Mabel Dodge Luhan was not feminine. Men were attracted to her by her intellect and lust for living.

Mabel Gamson, born in 1879, was the only child in an extremely wealthy and unhappy family in Buffalo, N.Y. During a European sojourn from 1904 to 1912, after the early death of her first husband, Gertrude and Leo Stein introduced her to an intellectual and cultural world that was an escape from the emptiness of her conventional upper-class life. Upon her return to New York City in 1912, she quickly joined a network of dissident intellectuals, political activists and avant garde writers and artists forming in Greenwich Village.

Discarding her second husband,

businessman Edwin Dodge, Mabel opened her mansion on lower Fifth Avenue for a weekly salon. There in 1913-14 large gatherings of liberals, socialists and anarchists, as well as artists, intellectuals, journalists and psychoanalysts debated politics, modern art, Freudianism, the war between the sexes, birth control and other controversial topics of the day.

Mabel Dodge was one of the organizers in 1913 of the Armory Show (where Picasso and other European abstract artists were first shown in the U.S.), and of the large workers' pageant in Madison Square Garden to support the Patterson strike by textile workers. She was on the advisory board and a contributor to *The Masses*, a supporter of the Women's Peace Party and an early popularizer of Freudian psychology in a weekly column for the Hearst papers. Her well-publicized affair with John Reed made her a symbol (erroneously) of sexual liberation.

In 1918, discouraged by a growing conservative political climate during World War I, and by the disintegration of the Greenwich Village circle, Mabel Dodge moved to Taos, N.M. There she started a campaign to preserve Native American culture and institutions, and to attract artists and writers (including Georgia O'Keefe and D.H. Lawrence) to the Southwest. Her commitment to this new cause was solidified by marriage in 1923 to a Pueblo Indian, Tony Luhan, her fourth and final husband with whom she lived in Taos until her death in 1962.

Lois Palken Rudnick—a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts in Boston—is particularly good at documenting how Mabel Dodge Luhan inspired fictional representation. She became a central figure in novels, short stories and plays by D.H. Lawrence, Carl Van Vechten and Max Easton. Rudnick demonstrates that male authors, while fascinated with Luhan, expressed great hostility toward her. "Mabel Dodge Luhan has been imagined dead in a greater variety of ways than any



Edward Weston/Mabel Dodge Luhan

BIOGRAPHY

From New York to New Mexico

other woman in American literary history. She has been disposed of by gang rape and suicide, had her heart torn out in an Indian sacrificial ritual, been squeezed to death by a snake and blinded by a vulture...frozen to death on a mountaintop...[and] struck dead by a stroke of heaven-sent lightning."

Rudnick analyzes such misogyny. She argues that Mabel and the fictional characters she inspired were "liberated women who

had inherited the male pioneering spirit...[and] man's hunger for achievement and experience. There is nothing more dangerous in the eyes of the men who wrote about Mabel than an indulged woman, uprooted from the traditional roles of wife, mother or Muse, who takes it into her head to meddle with the affairs of men."

Rudnick could have extended her analysis to the hostility that some male historians have expressed to-

Mabel Dodge Luhan, born 1879, inspired fictional representations.

ward Luhan. Most striking is Christopher Lasch's chapter on her in his early (1965) influential book, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963*. Lasch characterizes her as "an extremely neurotic woman with an irregular emotional history." She "scorned men" and "her homosexual tendencies revealed themselves more and more as an aspect of the will to power which pervaded all her sexual relations with women and men alike." While Rudnick and others praise the style, honesty and intellectual insights of Luhan's four-volume autobiography published in the '30s, Lasch sees it as depressing and banal.

Lasch presents Mabel as a "pioneer in the cult of orgasm," a leader in a decadent and destructive sexual revolution. Rudnick documents her frigidity and lack of interest in sex. Lasch links Mabel Luhan's supposed sexuality to her "will to power" and self-centeredness. Rudnick sees her frigidity and her need to manipulate people stemming from the lack of a sense of self—from Luhan's inability to channel her energy, intelligence and creativity into satisfying work of her own.

Mabel Dodge Luhan was not feminine or beautiful. Men were attracted by her "masculine" qualities—her energy, intellect and lust for living. Was it these same qualities—and her lack of "femininity"—that threatened men and fueled their hostility? Do intellectuals, artists and writers—men or women—have difficulty accepting their own and other's deviation from gender norms?

It is a tribute to Rudnick that her compelling portrait raises such feminist issues. There are other feminist questions, however, that Rudnick fails to address—the implications of Luhan's conflicts about motherhood, her rich and conflicted relationships with other women and her rejection of her own adolescent lesbianism.

Mabel Luhan's wealth also raises questions about social class that Rudnick completely ignores. Was Luhan's espousal of the Native American cause taken less seriously, not just because she was a woman, but because she built eight houses in Taos and at times imported fashion designers and hairdressers from Hollywood? How much was her need to control others the result of a class culture rather than because of unresolved gender and sexual conflicts? How much did her financial independence and the power of her wealth—rather than her character—inspire male hostility and resentment?

Despite these limitations, Rudnick has written a model biography. Rudnick portrays a complex woman with positive and negative traits. Her stance is captured in the judgment of Mabel Luhan's granddaughter, Bonnie Evans, with whom Rudnick concludes the book. She saw Mabel as a "spoiled, self-indulgent, self-centered prima donna.... But Bonnie found Mabel's self-directed energy liberating as well. She learned from her grandmother's independence and her courage and from [her] always resilient enthusiasm for living."

E. Kay Trimberger is an associate professor and coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at Sonoma State University in California. She is doing research on Greenwich Village in the early 20th century.

Nancy Garruba's Checkbook

It's a checkbook. True? False. It is really a work of art. "Not Altogether True. Not Altogether False" is the creation of Nancy Garruba, an artist and bookbinder in Washington, D.C. Designed in the form of a filled checkbook with comments written on the back, it is an ingenious and provocative little package that keeps the reader flipping pages to the end. Garruba has found a way to turn the ordinary documents of daily life into commentary on the terms of it. There they are, the residue of Garruba's relationships, in the form of payments for loans, rent, food, business costs, contributions to various causes. And on the back are statements about the assumptions that fuel her choices as producer, consumer, wife, citizen.

Consider the first check, a loan repayment scrawled on the "memo" section, "please cash this one mom." On the back the check reads, "As a young girl I was never taught that I should be able to support myself." Rubber-stamped on that statement is, "Not altogether true. Not altogether false." The next check, a loan repayment to her husband, clarifies the meaning: "As a young girl I was taught that I

NOTEBOOKS

should supplement my husband's income or be self-supporting in case of widowhood or divorce." Behind the routine of check-writing lie assumptions conditioned by accident of sex, race, place and age.

The book is nicely balanced between the serious and the ironic, its interlocking comments sometimes poking fun at the artist's own introspection. Garruba is no advocate of voluntary poverty, and if her checks to an underwear store and a food boutique are any guide, she's not above the little pleasures of the middle class. But she also knows the value of artistic independence, and it doesn't come cheap. "Not Altogether True. Not Altogether False" is proof that artists, even when they might like to be, are never far from the cash-flow

terms of our society's social relationships. If they have a checkbook, it's all there in black and white. Or if you're Nancy Garruba, in pink and blue. ■

Available for \$12 plus \$2 postage and handling, from #2, Frederick Douglass Ct., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

—Pat Aufderheide

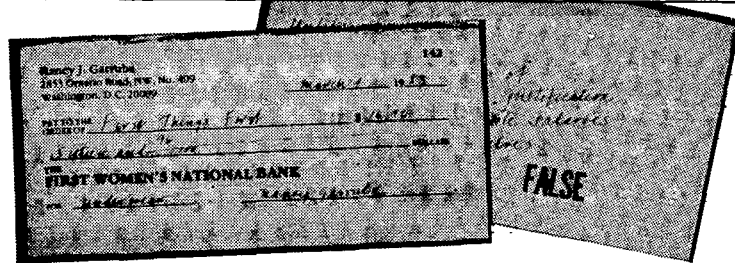
Greenham Women Everywhere

By Alice Cook and Gwyn Kirk
South End Press, 127 pp., \$6.50

This is a little book with a lot to say. Written by two women who have actively participated in the Greenham Peace Camp since its inception in August 1981, it goes beyond telling the story of the camp and the thousands of women who have opposed the

siting of 96 cruise missiles outside the small English town of Newbury. The women's infiltrations and blockades of the RAF/USAF base and their persistent dedication to peace and disarmament in the face of evictions and arrests are the basis of *Greenham Women Everywhere*. But interwoven through the story are the individual voices of many of the women who, motivated by fear, frustration and anger, have decided to take their stand at Greenham. These testimonies make the book both hauntingly real and politically inspiring. Blended with these personal stories is detailed and practical insight into the reasons for and the tactics behind women-only, non-violent opposition to nuclear arms. Included is first-hand information on organization, mobilization and dealing with the media. Descriptions of events such as the women's 1983 New Year's infiltration of the base and their circle dance atop a missile silo cannot but help bring home the fact that unexpected, unpredictable and imaginative forms of protest can be the most effective means of drawing widespread attention to and support for the disarmament movement.

—Jean Allman





By Kathleen Hulser

Skipitares' modernist puppet epic skewers the upbeat clichés about the Age of Invention.

BORN OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT, American culture has always made heroes of its scientists and tinkers. But the postwar period has featured a growing unease with the traditional American love of invention. Now theatrical designer and artist Theodora Skipitares has brought those ambiguities to the stage in a remarkable modernist puppet epic two years in the making called *Age of Invention: An American Trilogy*. The epic alternately celebrates American inventiveness and reveals its Faustian overtones.

Skipitares is aptly poised, as the daughter of immigrants, to capture a transitional mood in America's love affair with practical invention. She also draws on a long tradition, more popular in Europe than in the U.S., of adult theatrical use of puppetry.

With 300 puppets, from palm- to nearly full-size, Skipitares leapfrogs from the 18th century to the 20th, linking invention and entrepreneurship. Her stories are

illustrated with narration drawn from primary sources, a live synthesizer score, vocal interludes and even dance numbers.

The three sections of the performance, which premiered at New York's Theater for the New City in January, center on the confessions of three typical Americans: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison and Mike O'Connor (a prosthesis salesman who successfully impersonated a doctor). The opening scene cues us that Skipitares has a scathing historical imagination: a bison trio sings a macabre, back-handed tribute to the repeater rifle. By the time we witness a lightning transition from Franklin's electricity experiments to his early research into electroshock therapy, we realize that the historical record is rife with implications beyond the upbeat clichés of Yankee ingenuity.

Skipitares' inventiveness suits her theme. The buffalo, which dance to an idiosyncratic version of "Buffalo Gals," resemble Etruscan figures endowed with a can-can puppet canter. Elaborate

PERFORMANCE

Yankee pluck meets Faust

tableaux supply imagery of technological development and its contradictions. Other miniature theatrical effects include bas-relief with custom wiring and lighting.

For example, as Edison describes his infatuation with the commercial potential of speedy communications during the Civil War, a map of the U.S. covered with little masks whose jaws drop open and clack shut wryly illustrates the process. Eventually the free and slave portions of the map break apart. A city block on a tabletop lights up for a demonstration of Edison's role in both electricity and mass marketing of a utility.

The Thomas Edison and Ben Franklin figures are full-sized, portly gentlemen with lumpy faces and frayed white hair, reminiscent of the figures of sculptor Ed Kienholtz. Manipulated by puppeteers on stage in a grave and respectful manner, they evoke the conventions of classical Japanese Bunraku (where the human handlers are in view on stage but are not deemed "part of the fiction"). The hand, head and mouth movements have an unlikely expressiveness, and are given a special ironic twist in the third section, when the subject is Mike O'Connor, the prosthesis salesman.

While the use of puppets creates

a distancing effect, the quotations Skipitares has unearthed from her characters' memoirs balance it with a sometimes outrageous immediacy. O'Connor speaks of his mission to help people (he went to jail on malpractice charges after performing many operations without medical training.)

Edison glows at the idea of collecting money from each lighting of a household bulb. The pinched, calculating tenor of *Poor Richard's Almanac* is lampooned in a scene that echoes Brecht mixed with "The Red Detachment of Women": a group of handlers crisscrosses the stage with electrified banners, presenting Franklin's maxims with a hilarious solemnity.

The theater work bristles with low-tech stage wizardry, sly historical allusions and visual *double entendres*. As in her previous work *Micropolis*, Skipitares tackles challenging subjects in an expressionist manner. Sometimes she can't quite pull it off. Apparently during the creation of *Age of Invention*, she realized that women had been slighted, and a section of pioneer women bumping and rocking across the stage in Conestoga wagons was added. The sketch does not carry the weight of other sections.

Skipitares recreates the past so as to help us find our feet in the present, prodding us into examining a historical record that reveals the darker implications of American invention. Edison sums it up, saying: "A man with an interest in theory is a scientist. An inventor is interested in applications and money. I'm an inventor."

With military contracts inundating university research departments, and rhetoric of cost-benefit analysis engulfing public discourse, it is worth considering the roots of such attitudes. When Skipitares takes her show on the road, in a West Coast tour later this year, many of us may get the chance.

Kathleen Hulser is a New York-based arts critic. For further information on "The Age of Invention," contact Lisa Booth Management, 276 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025, (212) 662-7256.

You Read the
Headline, Now Read
the Comic Book

Back in 1982, a crude comic book circulating in Nicaragua, offering quick and easy ways to sabotage the Sandinista regime, was revealed to be the work of the CIA. Now, thanks to free enterprise, the comic book is in the public domain. Grove Press has issued a bilingual black and white version of the 16-page pamphlet. For design and content, the booklet is hardly worth its \$2 cover price. But as a, uh, graphic example of what is being done with our tax dollars, it's a worthwhile investment, especially for American taxpayers with reading disabilities. The booklet urges patriotic Nicaraguans to throw work tools in sewers, strew nails on highways, to come in late for work, and it offers a step-by-step instruction on making Molotov cocktails ("Coctel Molotof"). "No, we haven't heard from the CIA," says Grove's Fred Jordan. But he thinks they could have researched the booklet more effectively on the streets of New York. "I've seen a couple of things on my block that aren't in the

book," he says glumly.

Soviet Programs
for Evangelical TV?

On the roof of a building at Columbia University sits a satellite dish, which pulls down signals intended for television stations in the Soviet Union. Students of the W. Averell Harriman Institute for Advanced Study of the Soviet Union both run the equipment and analyze the 15 hours a day of Soviet programming. Originally intended as a device to help students learn spoken Russian, it has become a new tourist attraction in New York City, and the Institute's officials would love to see it become a tool of public policy. The program apparently proceeds with the blessings of Soviet officials, but so far the administration hasn't seized this opportunity to understand the Soviet Union through its TV shows. "I wish the president would watch some Soviet TV," said Institute assistant director Jonathan Sanders, offering to provide him with jelly beans and vodka. He also said, in an interview with *Advertising Age*, "I'd like American conservatives such as Jerry Falwell to see these prog-

rams. They stress family values and focus on children as the center of attention. The kids don't swear or ask obnoxious questions." He wants a regular exchange of Soviet and American TV, imagining a welcome reception in the Soviet Union for programs such as *Dukes of Hazzard* and *Little House on the Prairie*.

Department Store
Dramas

A new TV series, *Berenger's*, offers the capitalist intrigue of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* in a locale that is a virtual second home to many Americans: the department store. With some gut-grabbing success (subtle it's not), the series makes explicit the peculiar aura of romance, luxury and excess that surrounds an ordinary commodity purchase in a well-run department store. But as grotesque as the sexual and credit card affairs get on the air, they don't approach the real-life stories from the lives of the Bloomingdales that surfaced in a family scandal two years ago. And the brouhaha last year around the changing ownership of Washington, D.C., department

store Woodward & Lothrop was enough to fuel episodes of *Berenger's* for months to come. A recent comment by "Woodie's" new owner, Detroit multi-millionaire A. Alfred Taubman, suggested that the show's glitzy image is an article of faith for shopping mall magnates. "From a practical point of view," he said in the *Washington Post*, "no one really needs anything in America. You don't need another store. You don't need another dress. You really don't need anything."

Don't Spend the
Refund, Invest It

The Washington, D.C.-based Telecommunications Research and Action Center (TRAC), a Nader-sponsored organization, has a deserved reputation for tenacity. Back in 1978, the group (then called National Citizens Committee on Broadcasting) filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) charging AT&T with over-billing customers. The FCC dawdled for years, and finally TRAC sued the FCC in 1984, to force a decision. The upshot: a \$101 million rebate, along with \$78 million in interest.

Now comes the hard question—how to give the money back? TRAC has an answer for that too. The group has been developing consumer protection policy for the new, deregulated world of phone service. (For background on divestiture, read last week's *In These Times*.) As director Sam Simon says, "You have the equivalent of a church meeting going on here. Members of the board sit around the table and say, 'Somebody's got to do the dirty work and John's not here, so John will do it.' The telecommunications players are sitting around a cost table saying, 'The consumer's not here, that's where we'll put the cost.'" If the FCC takes a mere \$20 or \$30 million out of the total, Simon figures, and invests it in a trust fund for consumers, the interest alone ought to be enough to fund efforts that can get the consumer back to the cost table. He even thinks the FCC ought to like a public interest idea with a free-market twist to it, but TRAC's proposal has yet to get a hearing from an FCC headed by Mark Fowler, the man known to telecommunications activists as "the James Watt of the airwaves."

—Pat Aufderheide

Catering

continued from page 16

two huge screens broadcast first the Super Bowl and then the performers; a team of six tall women from a modeling agency served as table escorts; the Les Brown orchestra played on the big stage; and we had arranged 50 tables for the 500 guests.

In the lull of the morning set up, I had watched a few of the many Central American waiters play poker. One lost all his money learning the game. They were largely oblivious to the inauguration—for them it was just another job. They had not voted and were, for the most part, glad not to be home where the wars are.

When the guests had arrived and the third quarter of the Super Bowl blared on the two screens, I stood in line with my co-workers to pick up the first of five courses we would serve. Idly holding my big tray, not especially aware of the formal crowd around me, I was snapped to attention by these words: "Joyce, come here. I want you to meet the national director of Right to Life."

A man with glasses shook Joyce's hand. "Joyce here was the best leader of anti-ERA in New England," someone contributed.

When the cocktail clique to my side was joined by the director of Central American policy for the Conservative Alliance my fantasies began. I could almost hear the metallic clang of my tray as it whammed on their heads.

With a tray full of scallop appetizers, I arrived at my assigned table directly in front

of the stage. There I found James Watt. The former secretary of the interior had abstemiously turned his wine glass upside down. *Newsweek* photos of him hunting in Montana flashed before my eyes, and a vision of hot scallops in his lap almost overcame me.

As I spun from the table with my empty tray, someone asked me for more water at a nearby table. It was James Baker. Pouring the water, I stared hypnotized at the top of his head, looking at the bald spot, breaking my reverie only because the glass was full.

He was soon grinning on the stage (and on both TV screens) as he pronounced Grenada the greatest of all foreign policy victories and liberalism so dead that it no longer figures importantly into the debate. The crowd went wild. Then Watt mounted the stage to bless the food, the president and the next four years.

Barbi Benton, the former *Playboy* centerfold and Hugh Hefner girlfriend, was introduced as having appeared on *Hee Haw* several times, in addition to several sitcoms. Fortunately, her *Playboy* connection went unmentioned; Jerry Falwell was sitting right near the stage. Barbi sang a song and was then joined by an actress heralded for her six appearances on *Family Feud*—once even pitted against Sammy Davis Jr.

Davis himself was soon on the stage to praise Reagan in his patented saccharin style. He sang "I Gotta Be Me," "New York, New York" and, finally, "Ghostbusters." Every time Davis sang, "Who ya gonna call?" the model-escorts shrieked in unison, "Ghostbusters!" I had a vision of an America in which everybody knows the words to "Ghostbusters" and wears a sparkly outfit to a banquet or watches

on TV and wishes they could wear an outfit to it.

Before the evening was over, Lorne Green came out to heap more encomiums on the president, looking more gigantic in his overcoat than in *Bonanza* reruns or recent dog food commercials. We had meanwhile been scurrying all this time to keep the guests happy, and after serving the raspberry mousse began the long clean-up. I was glad for the hours.

At a Ford Motors dinner the night before, there had been a bed-sized cake replica of the American flag. It went untouched but greatly admired all evening. At the end of the night, the cake remained on the Astro-

IN THESE TIMES: FEB. 13-19, 1985 · 15
Turf floor of the tent, along with a great deal of left-over food.

While the entire kitchen staff watched, a Ford official hovered above the food and conferred on a walkie-talkie as to whether leftovers could be transported back to Ford's offices. He finally said we could have the food. A frenzy ensued; when someone pushed me I stepped in the big flag-cake.

The supervisor yelled that I'd made a mess and I gave up on the leftovers to go clean my shoe and sock. So much for letting us eat cake.

David O. Russell is a Washington, D.C., writer on cultural and political issues.

CALENDAR

WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 21

Washington's premiere of *The Good Fight*, a documentary about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War. Benefit for DSA DC/Md. Panel with filmmaker and Brigade vet to follow. Feb. 21 at 8:00 p.m., Inner Circle Theater, 2105 Pa. Ave., NW. \$10.00 Tickets at the door, in advance at Common Concerns Bookstore, or reserve by writing DSA DC/Md., 1346 Connecticut Ave., #810A, 20036.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

March 22-23

"...and Economic Justice for All!" Riverside Church Disarmament Program's national spring conference, March 22-23 in New York, will detail how debt, deficits and defense are connected to poverty, injustice and war. Speakers: Amott, Barnett, Coffin, Dellums, Ehrenreich, Stanback. (212) 222-5900, x238.

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Cynthia Diaz.

CHICAGO, IL

February 17

The Peace Museum's newest exhibition *The Writing on the Wall - An Exhibition of Works by Calligraphic Artists* will open on Feb. 17. This exhibition marks the first time that calligraphers have come together to express their feelings about the need to end the threat of nuclear war. Opening reception Sunday, February 17, 12:00-5:00 p.m. Admission \$1.50 adults, 50¢ students, senior citizens, at The Peace Museum, 430 W. Erie, (312) 440-1860.

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JEWISH CURRENTS, FEBRUARY—"Sharon, a Defender of Jews?" an

editorial; "Self-Portrait by Leroi Jones" by Mark Naison; "NY Coalition of Black-Jewish Leaders," a statement; "Who Decides How Many Children?" by Carol Jochowitz. Single copies postpaid, \$1.50. Subscriptions \$12 USA. *Jewish Currents*, Dept. T., 22 E. 17th St., NYC 10003.

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and application materials, write to or call: Dr. Severyn Bruyn, SESP, Program Director, Dept. of Sociology, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. (617) 552-4130.

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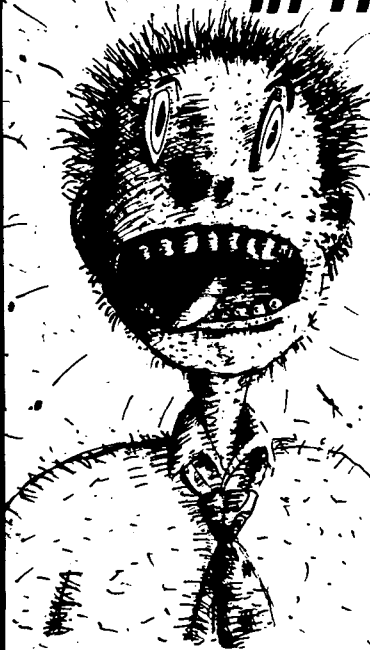
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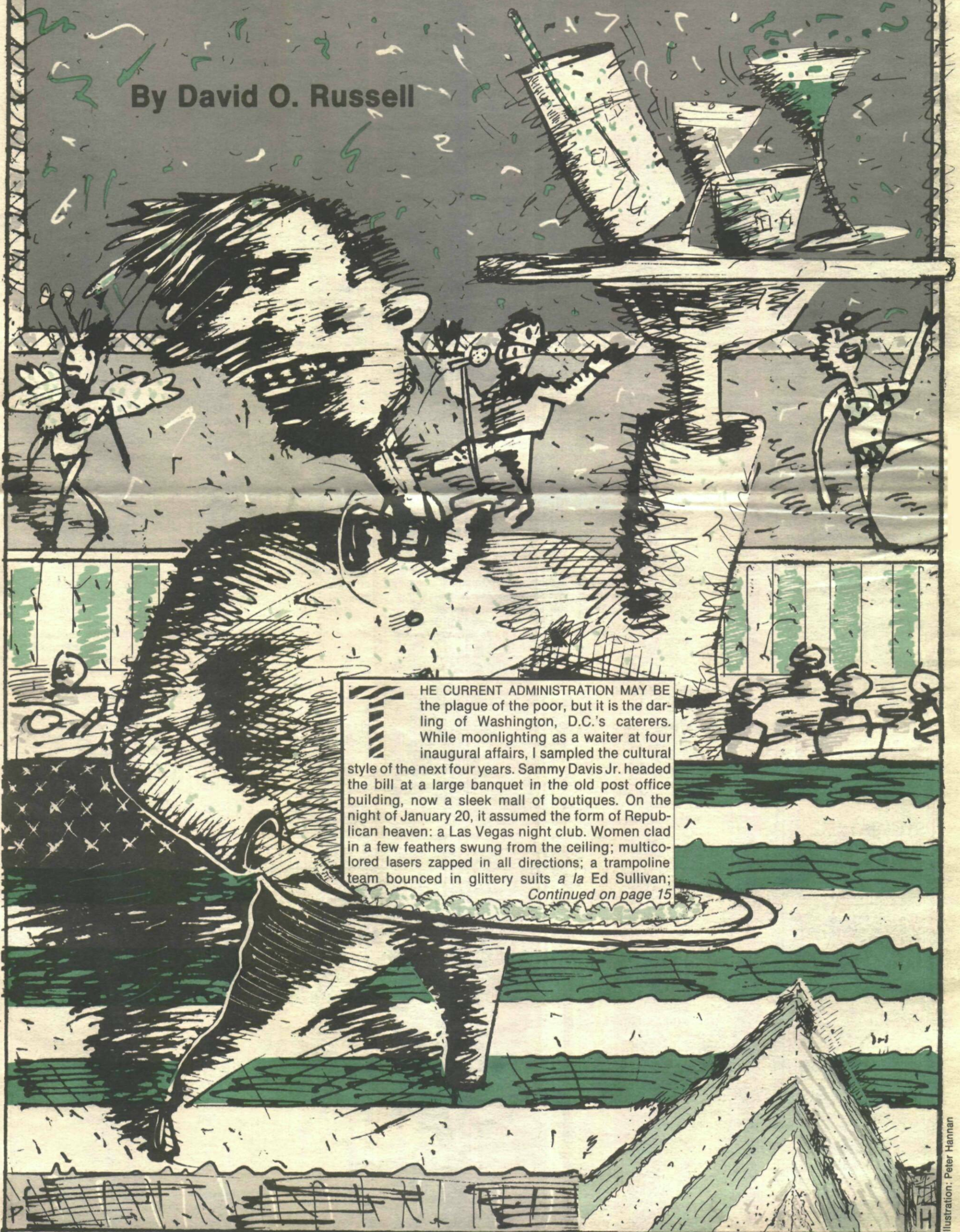
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CATERING TO THE REPUBLICANS

By David O. Russell



THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION MAY BE the plague of the poor, but it is the darling of Washington, D.C.'s caterers. While moonlighting as a waiter at four inaugural affairs, I sampled the cultural style of the next four years. Sammy Davis Jr. headed the bill at a large banquet in the old post office building, now a sleek mall of boutiques. On the night of January 20, it assumed the form of Republican heaven: a Las Vegas night club. Women clad in a few feathers swung from the ceiling; multicolored lasers zapped in all directions; a trampoline team bounced in glittery suits *a la* Ed Sullivan;

Continued on page 15